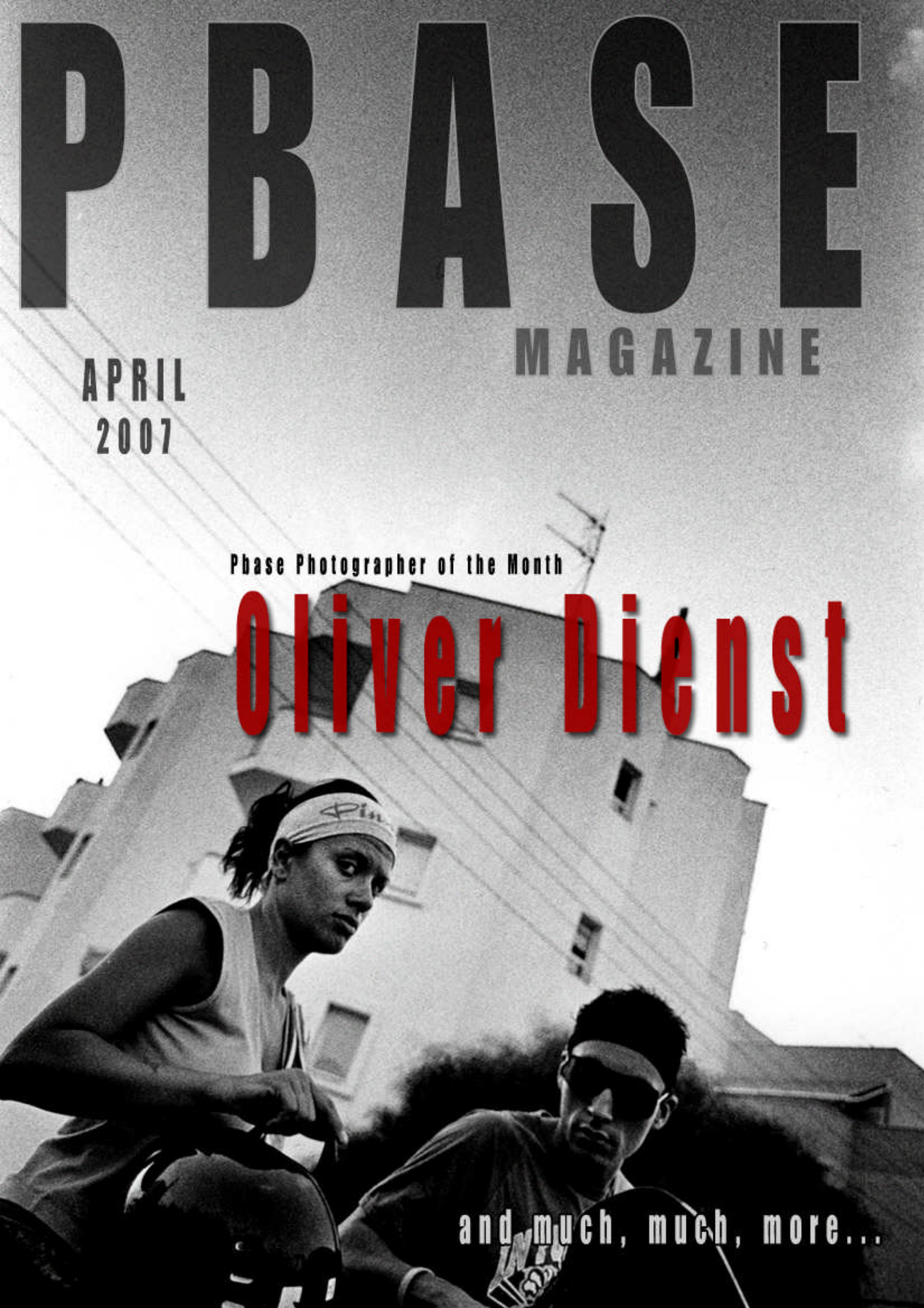
PBASE

MAGAZINE

APRIL
2007



Phase Photographer of the Month

Oliver Dienst

and much, much, more...

PBASE.com MAGAZINE

ISSUE 9 | APR | 2007

Editorial Notes

COVER PHOTO BY OLIVER DIENST
DESIGN BY GARY BLANCHETTE

FROM : The Editor's Desk

Sunny 16 rule. The 1/3rd composition rule & the Golden Rectangle. The 'level your horizon' rule. The hyperfocal distance calculations.

We can go on. *And on*. Photography, like most other professions is full of guidelines, which have evolved over the years. There are many who swear by these guidelines and treat them as rules to judge and/or take every frame in their collection. And then you have people who don't really care much about any of these rules and capture a photograph as they interpret it. Once such person is Oliver Dienst, who is our featured PBase photographer of the month for this issue. He believes in capturing the moment any which way that accentuates the story behind that moment. It takes much more skill to break rules and produce such striking photography as opposed to staying within defined limits for all our work. Oliver's work is what I consider '*strikingly out of the box*' photography and his spot as our featured photographer for this issue is more than well deserved.

And then taking 'out of box' photography one step further, we also have an article on *Lomophotography* by Andy – don't worry if you have no idea about what it is - Andy takes us through how the mind of a *lomographer* works in some detail.

And of course, we have our usual sections in addition to the above.

As you many have noticed, this issue has been slightly delayed – as I had posted on the website, being a new dad is a very time consuming (albeit very exciting) job, and it had its expected toll on this issue of the magazine. I guess we never learn – each time, we agree to finish up early only to find ourselves scrambling the last week.

In reality, we had actually finished the articles by the due date, but barely so and it was not yet proof read. So we decided to push the release date back by a few weeks so Wanda gets a chance to clean up the magazine like she always does so expertly.

Some updates: Larena, who has been an integral part of our team since issue #1 (she was responsible for the PDF conversion of our magazine) has taken a break starting this issue, due to her increased work load. Thanks a lot, Larena, for all the help that you extended towards this voluntary effort. We really appreciate it!

Speaking of team members, 'Eric the Enthusiastic' (aka Eric Kuhn – the co-editor of this magazine) seems to have temporarily moved to Washington D.C., so I look forward to meeting him in person (the Internet, for all its usefulness, lacks the human touch, as I always say!). I hear Eric has already emblazoned the PBase Magazine logo in the White House and he promises to interview some really important people for our forthcoming issues.

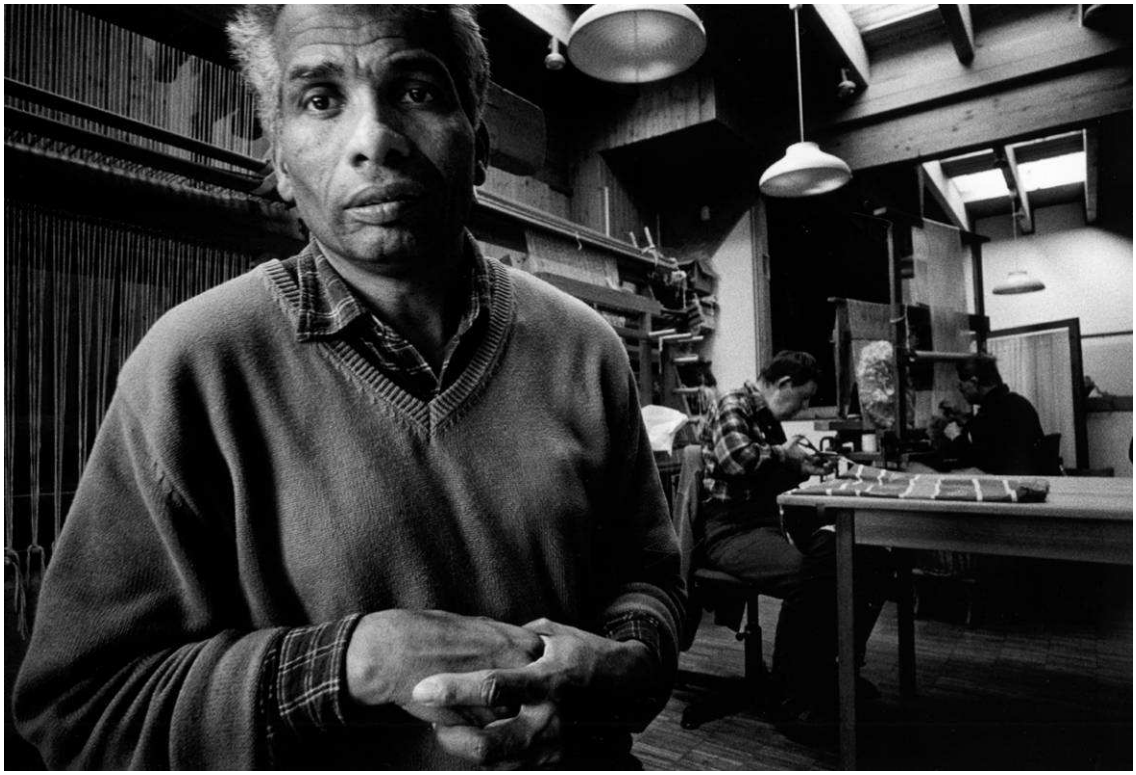
And that is pretty much all I have to say for now. Enjoy reading the rest of the issue and thanks for your patience.

Now please excuse me, my baby needs to be burped…

~ Arjun Roychowdhury
www.pbase.com/arjunrc

PBase Photog: Oliver Dienst

Oliver was born and continues to live in Germany. He has been self-taught in black and white photography, a passion which has been part of his life for over twenty years. He read books on technique, learned by trial and error and was inspired by the photography of masters like Henry Cartier-Bresson, Marc Riboud, Bruce Gilden, William Klein, Josef Koudelka, Anders Peterson, Michael Ackerman and others.



Germany 2005

PBase Magazine: Oliver, tell us a bit about yourself.

I was born in Halle/ Saale (GDR) in 1966. After school I did an apprenticeship in industrial plumbing but only worked for a short period of time in this profession. Later, I started a private advertising agency. I've been working in a social community for mentally challenged and handicapped people since 1996.

Photography has held center stage in my life for more than twenty years.

PBM: Your PBase profile says *"…[I was] fascinated by the photographs of the masters like Henry Cartier-Bresson, Marc Riboud, Bruce Gilden, William Klein, Josef Koudelka, Anders Petersen, Michael Ackerman and others*". What was the one thing in all their styles that impressed you the most and made your photography the way it is today?

All of these images depict special moments in human life and are in black and white. I would say this is the one thing that made a lot of impact on me. Besides that, I am not sure if there is any one thing that I really thought was in common and which impacted me.

In thinking about these photographers, I do admire their sensibility for the 'decisive moment', their outstanding ability in handling flash and wide angle lenses and their unconventional ways of working with sharpness and different shades of grey in the context of the artistic statements they want to make.

By studying their pictures I realized that the same world can be viewed in so many different ways.

PBM: What is it in B/W photography that attracts

In his view:

"In thinking about these photographers, I do admire their sensibility for the 'decisive moment', their outstanding ability in handling flash and wide angle lenses and their unconventional ways of working with sharpness and different shades of grey in the context of the artistic statements they want to make"

Street, Rome, 2004

Market via sannio,Rome, Italy 2004

Capital, Berlin

PROFILE

NAME: OLIVER DIENST

WEBSITE: HTTP://WWW.PBASE.COM/OLIVERDIENST/

FROM: HALLE/SALLE, GERMANY

YEARS AS PHOTOGRAPHER: 20

PHOTOGRAPHY STYLE: DOCUMENTARY, SPECIAL MOMENTS

EQUIPMENT: LEICA MP-4, 21MM, 28MM, 35MM LENS (FILM PHOTOGRAPHER)

you to it ?

I have to admit that I visualize more in B/W than color. Also, I feel that B/W is a much better medium for expressions – colours don't attract me. You can see this by closely studying the sequence of photographs in my gallery '3rd European Elvis Festival': I am using colours almost in a 'B/W-manner'.

What attracts me most with B/W photography is the seemingly endless possibilities of working with different films, exposure indexes, developers and more; all the handicraft in the darkroom, like dodge & burn and more.

PBM: Several of your photographs are striking in the crop that you chose. Consider this (*ed: see sidebar Bad Nauheim,2004)* for example, I am curious how your mind works and how you visualize. Tell us how you approached this image and how your mind worked to create this crop.

Germany, 2005

The feeling for the artistic directions in which I want to go arises the very moment I'm confronted with certain situations. In looking through the view finder I'm composing the details of the picture. And often I'm waiting for interactions, special and unexpected reactions of the framed people which make the situations unique.

Specific to the image you are referring to, it demanded patient watching and then catching the right moment.

Capturing the frame, the moment and the mood come naturally to me and I do not really analyze aspects of technique and composition as much as I just rely on what I feel is 'right'.

PBM: What do you carry in your camera bag and which lens/camera do you find yourself using most often ?

Well, I carry a camera (unbelievable!), a lot of filmrolls, a pencil, a light meter, tobacco and papers, a cigarette lighter and some other things.

I like my Leica MP-4 I the best (with 35mm and 21mm lenses). It's a very reliable, small and easy to use camera.

Germany 2006

PBM: Have you shot both film and digital ? If so, how do you compare the two in your line of photography ?

Almost all of my pictures are taken with silvergrain B/W films. I took a series of colour pictures with a digital camera once to assess if it's possible for me to work with this new digital trend. Speaking for the moment, it is not.

PBM: Another example of a striking 'capturing the moment' photo is this *(ed: see image below)*: - the entire situation is so incongrous that it makes one smile. Again, tell us what you as a photographer saw in this image when you took it.

Germany, 2006

As you say: the whole situation is incongruous. That's why I took this picture.

It sometimes takes a long time waiting to let the world arrange itself like this.

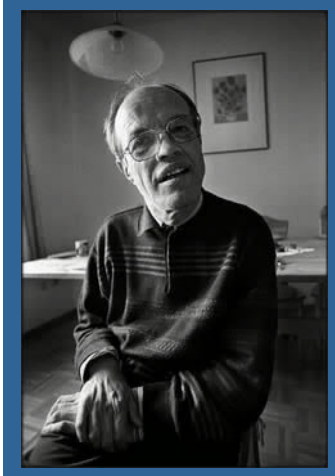
PBM: Is your darkroom "digital" or do you prefer the old wet-lab techniques and processes ?

I usually work in a traditional darkroom. Between 2003 to 2005, I used a film scanner to digitize my films. I tried to simulate the dodge & burn techniques with photoshop and took prints with carbon inks on bütten paper. It was interesting for me to experience the differences between the two methods. I clearly prefer the tradtional slow handwork procedure: it has different steps and feels different - the darkness, the smell and touch of materials. So yes, I prefer the wet-lab.

Of all my galleries, only the '3rd European Elvis Festival' series is finished using photoshop.

PBM: Tell us a bit about your project "simply the life"

Bad Nauheim, 2004



From the project, 'Simply the life'

From the project, 'Simply the life'

Another Rome, Centro Storico

'Simlpy the Life' is a long term project which takes place in a sheltered community with disabled people.

This situation brings up many aspects that are important for my work: I am talking about making contact with the unfamiliar, about people being different, about acceptance and appreciation of strange, irregular and bewildering aspects of people and of the world.

PBM: Have you every exhibited your work ? If not, do you plan to ?

I participated in different group exhibitions. That was around ten years ago. In the last three years, I have presented my work in smaller places/exhibitions.

Balearic islands, 2005

At the moment I'm preparing for a major exhibition in 2008.

PBM: Is photography your primary source of income ?

No, it isn't. I'm a non-professional and an independent photographer. I'm happy to choose my subjects freely and without commercial interests.

PBM: Have you ever documented any riots or potentially dangerous situations ?

Yes - In Prague, in 1989, I was taking photos amongst a crowd of demonstrators. All of a sudden, through the view finder of my camera, I saw a policeman running up to me and lifting a beating stick. I took the picture and immediately afterwords,I felt a sharp pain in my ear and on my shoulder. The policeman hit me and instantly destroyed my camera and all of my film rolls. So much about interaction and unique situations.

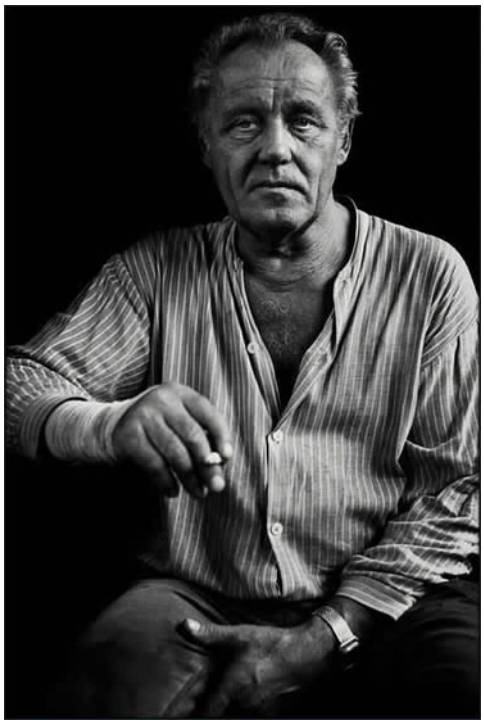
PBM: Finally, your photography is probably as non-traditional as it gets. What advice would you have for our readers who want to 'get your eye' for photography ?

I hope that nobody really wants to get 'my eyes' – everybody should keep his 'own eyes' and be proud at looking life in his own way.

It is my conviction that any truly unconventional approach to photography can only develop from an authentic and individual view on the world.

The motivation of going into this direction is, in my experience, always the dissatisfaction with what one has produced up to this point and the search for new ways of expressing one's inner visions.

I am not trying to match anyone's expectations and I am also not trying to be especially different. For me it is important to challenge the viewer's creativity and playfulness. I don't care about situations that explain themselves easily. I always try to leave as much 'open space' for individual interpretations to my work as possible.

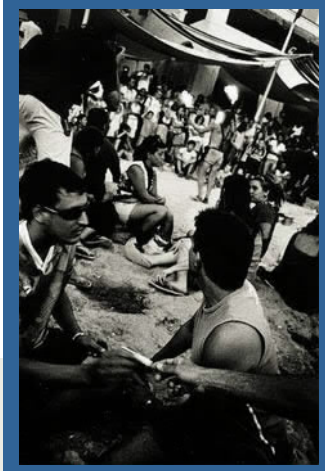


Workers

Germany 2006

Another Rome, Centro Storico

Fragments torres vedras, somewhere in the town



San antonio, baleric islands, 2005

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

Our thanks to Peter Kozikowski, Sam Miller, Steve H & Todd Curry. As Peter puts it, Oliver's BW galleries are '*one of the best I have seen on PBase*'. Sam adds '*can't believe a photographer of his quality is below 200,000 hits - top quality traditional B&W documentary photography*'. And Todd, in an email exchange urges us to feature work of people like Oliver who are refreshingly different from the regular photographers. We hear ya Todd! And we agree! So hope you like it!

PRO PHOTOG: Pat & Emi Kanan

Pat and Emi Kanan have been traveling and photographing the world for over 29 years, concentrating most of their efforts on images of Europe. They intensified their efforts in 1998 when they purchased a cottage in Hungary. They spend several months each year in Europe and the remainder of their time in Colorado, showing their photographs in Colorado and the U.S. at some of the top art shows. Their passion for travel and photography is evident in their ability to produce award-winning art photographs. They have found creative ways to do the work they love and have developed the kind of enthusiasm that naturally leads to success. As a result their photographs hang in many homes and offices around the country.

PBase Magazine: I want to start from a line in your bio that says that says you have found "creative ways to do the work [you] love." Can you elaborate more on "creative ways?"

Pat: We just travel the back roads of Europe and try to get lost. We try to find those special places that a lot of people would not find. That's one of the main ways we do things and we just go places people don't go.

Emi: Many times it is really tricky to get to many places, including getting there when the light is proper. Many times we were taking pictures on top of walls, like property divider walls in Ireland. Being creative is not necessarily technical, but where and how you get the shot.

PBM: So many people go to the cities and countries that you photograph, as tourists, and take tourist photos. What makes your pictures so different as not being a tourist photo?

Pat: First, we sell most of our pictures at art shows. People buy our pictures mostly because they have been there, to that country, and relate to it. Also, they won't touch it if they know it is digital. We have digital cameras but you will find that 75 or 100 percent of the photographers in an art show are going to have a sign in their tent that says "The original photographs shown are from original slides or negatives and have not been digitally enhanced or manipulated."

Even thought slide film or negative film can be manipulated just as much as digital cameras, the average person that comes in to buy a photograph has this perception that it is real if it has not been taken digitally. All of us photographers who do these art shows learn this quickly. Even though we all have digital cameras, 75 percent of the average guy that comes in to buy a picture is going to want one that is not taken digitally, believe it or not. Our pictures are very nice. The colors are nice and everything, and the first question out of their mouth is, "Are these enhanced?" We say "no" and then they know it is real. We know film could be just as altered as a digital camera, but people have this perception. They come in to buy and say, "Oh, this is a picture of Santorini," and as soon as they find out it is not enhanced, they're more excited about it than if we told them we took this photo digitally.

Emi: It is not an easy task to find the right light and the right spot during the day and aldo deciding how and when to take those pictures. Just recognizing some of the basic things such as light and how do you work with the available light, and what time of the day you are able to take that shot is hard work. Many times you can't do what you would ideally want. For example, they have all these narrow streets with big buildings in Europe. When do you get the light in there? It's between 11:30 in the morning till 12:30, or 1:00 in the afternoon. A lot of things are against you, but it is composition and how do you see and how can you pick up that particular spot or photograph of what you want to take, that makes a difference.

PBM: What do you then make of all these people who use Photoshop?

Pat: That is fine, but that is a totally different art than what we do. We have digital cameras and go in and change things for our own good, but the actual photos that we sell are not changed digitally. I know looking at the past PBase issues it looks like a lot of focus these days with photographers is how do you do Photoshop and

PROFILE

NAME: PAT AND EMI KANAN

WEBSITE: *WWW.DOORSTOTHEOLDWORLD.COM*

FROM: LAKEWOOD, COLORADO

PHOTOGRAPHY STYLE: EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE

YEARS AS PHOTOGRAPHER: 29 TOGETHER, 9 YRS FULLTIME OCCUPATION

EQUIPMENT:

(PAT) PENTAX 645N, PENTAX 1:4.5, 80-160MM, PENTAX 1:2.8, 45MM

(EMI) CANON ELAN 7, CANON 1:3.5-4.5, 28-105MM, CANON 1:3.5-4.5, 20-35MM, SIGMA 1:4.5-6.7, 100-300MM ,NIKON D80 (NOT OUR PRIMARY EQUIPMENT) NIKON 1:4.5, 55-200MM, NIKON 1:3.5-5.6, 18-55MM

SIDEBAR:

"Even thought slide film or negative film can be manipulated just as much as digital cameras, the average person that comes in to buy a photograph has this perception that it is real if it has not been taken digitally. All of us photographers who do these art shows learn this quickly. Even though we all have digital cameras, 75 percent of the average guy that comes in to buy a picture is going to want one that is not taken digitally, believe it or not"

Twilight in Venice

what is the latest Photoshop, this and that. But we're in the business of making money; this is how we make our living, so we have to do things a little differently.

Venice Reflections – special moment that changed a few minutes later

PBM: What is your number one piece of advice for our readers who will not use Photoshop and just pick up a film camera?

Emi: Light and composition are the two major things when you want to be a good photographer. How do you recognize it? How do you train your eyes? You either have a natural eye to see things or you can train yourself to understand these two major things. What do you put into that viewfinder? How do you narrow down your subject and understand light. Many times you have no light whatsoever – but you need to make the best of the situation. You would be surprised how many beautiful photos we have taken in fog and pouring rain. We had to find the subject to take those pictures. It all comes back down to those two major tenets of photography.

PBM: Do you develop the prints yourself?

Pat: No. we have a good lab here in Denver that does it for us.

PBM: Do you ever shoot in black and White?

Pat: No. With our digital camera we sometimes change it to black and white for our own selves, because I do like black and white. But the ones that we sell are all in color.

PBM: You have been together for 29 years and have been in business together for 9. What were you doing before you went into photography together?

Emi: Pat had an engineering company and I was an investment broker.

PBM: Then what made you decide to start this business?

Pat: We lost six friends in six months to cancer, heart attack, and stroke. They were all way too young to have died, all in their late 50's. We looked at each other and said, "Do we need a bigger house and a fancier car?" This could have been us because Emi had cancer 30 years ago and I had an angioplasty 12 years ago. So we both quit our jobs the same day and at this point we had never sold a picture. We decided we were going to do what we loved and what our passion was, which was photography. We knew we both had a talent for it. We quit on the same day. Emi got on a plane to buy a cottage in Hungary and I put up our big house for sale and we downsized. The rest is history! For nine years we have been making our living doing this. I think apart of this we had an ability to sell and market things. We really studied what people wanted and have been successful at it.

Emi: It is interesting. Originally when we came up with the name of our company, *Doors To The Old World*, "Old World" in our mind was Central or Eastern Europe.
We started taking photos in Hungary and went to Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania and then, during the same trip, we went to Western Europe and took pictures there, too. So guess what? We came over here (US) and nobody bought the Central European photos. This was a sign for us, we figured out why people buy our photos. That is when we figured out pretty quickly the number one reason was because they have been there, they had ancestors there and then the third one is they liked the actual photos. It came into this question of marketing: Why do people buy the photos? You have to understand it. It is not always "Oh My, I love it and it will fit above my sofa."

Pat: I agree - they usually have some sort of connection or relationship with that photograph.

Hall Statt – beautiful town in Austria

PBM: Pat, how is it working with your wife?

Pat: That was a big concern when we started because we have different personalities and we were concerned about working together for 24 hours a day. But it has worked out very well. We don't compete against each other. Which ever pictures come out the best, that is the one we use.

PBM: Emi, how is it working with your Husband?

Emi: That was a big question: what will happen to your relationship being together for 24 hours a day. We don't get into arguments about certain things, like, I don't like this picture and I want to do

Strada del Vino - Road in Tuscany

it this way when it comes to framing and who does what. Somehow it works when you have a good relationship.

PBM: When you travel, can you ever just enjoy the scenery or are you always looking at it through the lens?

Pat: I think we enjoy it more because we are looking at it through the lens. We enjoy every tree and every snowflake and every hill. We actually see things so much differently since we have been photographers full time than we used to. I don't think we can help but see it through the lens. We enjoy ourselves, don't get me wrong.

Cobblestone street – Eugisheim, France

Emi: We don't necessarily go to where the tourists go or match the time of the day or the time of the year when tourist do. We seldom photograph people. I personally avoid places which are full of tourists. We don't go to big cities for example. We went to Florence finally this year, but it was a sort of a side trip. When we went to Florence, I was not very excited; I had been there before – too many people!
Pat: Our kind of thing is castles, cottages, and cobblestone streets, than it is big buildings and big cities.

PBM: How would you categorize your style of photographer?

Pat: Architectural and landscape.

Emi: I sometimes enjoy get into more *offbeat* photography. For example, I take pictures of odd markings on walls. They have fabulous colors, fabulous lines, but nobody buys them because we confuse them. If I would have a separate tent, I would do well with some of the more contemporary styled photographs, but that is not our bread and butter. I have some really wonderful photos and I really like them, but it always boils down to: do you have a sellable photograph?

PBM: Is photography looked at differently around the world? Or do you think that with all the troubles in the world, photography can be a common bond for everyone?

Boat Ropes – Along the sea shore in Portugal

Pat: Europeans do not hang photography in their houses like we do in America. I think it could be a good thing as far as connecting people. We never have any problems with people not letting us take a photograph. So far we have never seen anything negative in all the nine years.

Emi: We try to stay away from all the political upheaval and stay away from politics when it comes to our business. As of right now we look at everything from the artistic eye, rather then get involved into the political aspects. If we get into photographing people in different parts of the world (we would love to go out to different parts of the world, other than Europe) but I know it would not be good for our business because we are getting away from what our core strength is.

PBM: It sounds you have been successful in the business because the key is shooting what people know and want.

Pat: Yes. People will be hundreds of feet away from our tent and say, "Oh, Santorini!" They relate to our pictures and we try to take pictures that people will relate to. Somehow we have been successful at this. One thing we do is we might fall in love with a picture and it doesn't sell. So what we do is have a big "Help us Choose" cocktail party and will narrow down thirty pictures from a trip that we think are excellent photographs. We will have people come to the cocktail party, choose their top six favorite pictures (starting with their most favorite, second most favorite, and so on) and that is our marketing research. Sure enough, some of the ones we fall in love with are not the ones they pick and that is one of the ways we pick the pictures that we sell.

PBM: What is the best piece of advice that you received when you started out as a photographer?

Pat: I think that you see things differently with your eye than the camera sees it. Your mind focuses in on one thing even thought your peripheral vision sees the rest of it. Then when you take that same picture, get it back, it records everything

Broom and Bucket - Devecser, Hungary

equally. You have to narrow that down so you get rid of the clutters. I think that is probably the biggest thing we learned to start out with.

Emi: Turn your camera around once in a while!. Most people keep their camera in their hand horizontally. Twist it, turn it, try and get a new perspective!

Pat: One advice someone gave us at the very beginning was take lots of pictures when you find that special spot and lots of exposures. It served us well. You'd be surprised at how many more interpretations you can arrive at with different exposures of the same scene.

PBM: Your European photographs are breathtaking. Do you take equally breathtaking photographs in America?

Pat: Utah is breathtaking with all the red rocks and the formations. Living in Colorado you have beautiful areas as well. The way we started out is of course doing Colorado, and Aspen and Mountain photography. But we have this niche now with European doors to the old world that we confuse people with an American photograph in our tent.

Emi: Sometimes, selling local photos to local people are hard. An example is we had probably one of the best photographs of Bryce Canyon. It was just fabulous. We then did a show in Saint George, Utah and nobody wanted to buy the photograph there even though you would think it would fit into their homes better.

PBM: You travel so much. Is there a story that stands out along the way?

Emi: Once, in Romania we ran into four men, way up in the mountains. They looked like nomads.
Pat continues:: Something out of medieval times. They had a big axe over their shoulders and blood on their gloves and had heavy fur coats on. They did not speak any language we spoke but somehow we communicated with them, fearful at the same time!
Emi: I said, "Pat, stop the car, stop the car!" My mother was with us at that time and you would think that was a really stupid move because these people could just swing their axe at us! But they didn't. We took some really great photos and we ended up getting their address –we sent them 5 x 7 and 8 x 10 photos in return. That is the beauty with travel – you are never bored and new things happen to you all the time. Sometimes it takes a bit of a risk taking attitude to experience something very new, as was in this instance.

PBM: Is there one place that you really want to photograph that you have not been to?

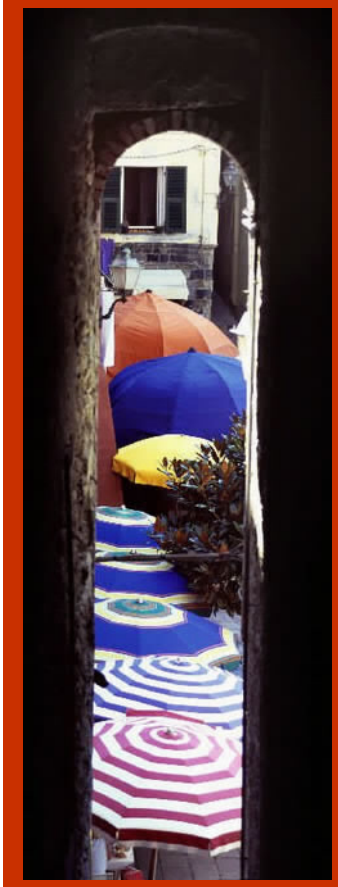
Pat: We want to do the lavender fields in France in the spring time. Interestingly enough, England, Ireland and Scotland are our favorite places to photograph.

Emi: I am looking forward to going to Italy – we are starting some workshops there.

PBM: It's a tough life that you have to go to Italy!

Emi: *(laughs)* Well someone has to do it!

Tuscan Trees - stop the car look at those silhouettes



Vernazza Umbrellas - stairway in Cinque Terre, always turn around and look behind you

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

PHOTOSHOPOGRAPHY: HDR magic

This tutorial is a condensed re-print of Trey Ratcliffe's tutorial located here. Trey describes himself in a nutshell as so: "Most people find me odd, and others have trouble finding me at all. I'm often busy doing something terribly important, but it seems hardly important to the other person once they have found me and asked me what the hell I am doing". His hobbies include philosophy, photography, writing fiction, rock climbing, snowboarding and more. On the left you can see what Trey describes as 'one slight shade of evolution' with each one obviously amused by the bicuspids of the other.

HDR Magic – featuring HDR 2.0

I hope this tutorial on my evolving HDR techniques proves useful to you! I receive a lot of emails from people who stumble across my photography asking how I do them. Rather than sending each one a huge response, I made this little tutorial because I was feeling particularly open-source one fine day. You can view some of the most popular pictures by clicking here. Most of these are HDR.

What is HDR?

HDR is short for High Dynamic Range. It is a software technique of taking either one image or a series of images, combining them, and adjusting the contrast ratios to do things that are virtually impossible with a single aperture and shutter speed.

I will post a few interesting HDR photographs that I have taken that people seem to like.

I'm a huge defender and believer of utilizing HDR as a technique for processing photos because I think it helps to evoke my actual memory of the scene. It's just another tool that digital photographers can utilize depending on the situation. As opposed to the camera shutter and aperture, the human eye actually scans the scene at a very high rate of speed, constantly adjusting the pupil diameter to adjust the light and color levels. The pre-frontal cortex builds a quilt-like image that is comprised of millions of little bits, combined with neuron-connected memories of colors of objects.

For example, when you look at a sunset, you can see all the colors of the clouds and sky, but you can also see all the colors of the trees and rocks in the foreground. This is why, many times, people get home after a vacation and sigh at their pictures and tell their friends, "Well, it was much better when you were there." So hey, it's 2006, why not use software and the built-in ability of your camera to make a beautiful rendition of what you *really* saw?

HDR Tutorial – Multiple Exposures

The first part of the tutorial looks at HDRs from multiple exposures. The second part deals with HDRs from a single RAW file.

The tutorial also discusses clouds and this is really a detail of the layer process. You can use this same technique not just to accentuate clouds, but also petals on a flower, edges on a building, and similar.

Part 1 – Get your Apple on (but it also works if you refuse to wear a black turtleneck and use an Apple)

Speaking of computers, Macs are great, and my Mac's CPU does not melt - it handles all this stuff with reckless aplomb. I used to hate Macs and hate Mac people, but I'm a changed man. These things are great! Okay I digressed way too early in this tutorial.

What apps do you need? I have the essentials: Photoshop, Photomatix, and Lightroom. You can do without Lightroom, but if you are taking a lot of shots, it would behoove you to organize them. Sure, the rest of your life is a disorganized mess, but it doesn't mean your photos have to be. I will of course talk more about these apps below.

If you buy Photomatix, be sure to use the discount coupon code "**stuckincustoms**. Hey, it's better than a sharp stick in the eye. This is the same thing the priest said at my wedding.
As for a camera, any DSLR will do. I use the Nikon D2X, but I've also taken many good HDRs with the D70. It is important that the camera has auto-bracketing and can shoot in RAW mode.

Now that you have all your equipment and software and black turtlenecks, we can move on to the photo itself.

FROM TREY'S "THE BEST" LIST

This is Nathaniel. Nathaniel's dream is to get closer to God and to make sure his mom is happy.

Nathaniel is currently four years old and carrying wood with his two sisters down a dusty cart-road in an unmarked Amish village somewhere between Allegheny and Tionesta, Pennsylvania. In pauses between talking to me, he looks sideways at his older sisters, who peacefully nod towards him. I tell him that he looks big and strong and then I help him carry the wood to his parents' home, where he lives with his other nine brothers and sisters

Haunting eyes

Piercing the skies

Part 1 – Look at the world in HDR

It is key to choose good HDR candidates. What I look for are extreme levels in light in a given scene.

Here is the starting image. This is the image taken by most cameras in this situation. Notice there are a lot of darks and a lot of brights. It's kind of interesting, but not nearly as interesting or as eye-splitting as the HDR version, which I put right beneath it.

Original

Reworked

This part of the tutorial will focus on those three pictures of the grotto. You can see the exposures (from Aperture, which I used to use) are all different… in this case +2/0/-2. It was taken on a tripod (very important).

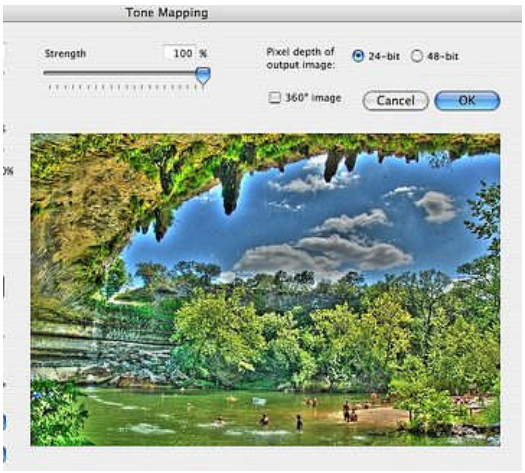
I selected those three pictures and exported the JPEGs to a folder. Note that now I use all RAWs. I shoot all my exposures in RAW because sometimes I just take that one RAW and turn it into an HDR. This is a process I describe later.

In Photomatix, go to HDR > Generate. Inside that dialog, choose the multiple exposures. In this case I chose the three JPGs I just exported. After that, choose the defaults until it generates the HDR picture. If you did not use a tripod (tsk tsk), then use that checkbox on the 3rd dialog to "Align Images". It will do a half-decent job, but not nearly as optimal as a tripod.

After that, go to HDR > Tone Mapping. This will open up a fun dialog box with all sorts of sliders and buttons to play with. There is no "magic" selection in here. It totally depends on the picture. There are a few rules of thumb that I have discovered, however:

- If you take the luminosity below 0, you will get a halo-effect. It can sometimes look cool, but it usually makes the picture look fake or cobbled together.
- If you set the smoothing to anything other than "high" you get some very strange coloration and embossing effects that no longer look natural. You can do some artistic things with different smoothing settings, but they rarely look realistic.
- The color saturation should be set a little lower than you think. The final version always comes out 10-20% more saturated than the preview for some reason.
- High luminosity causes noise. But don't worry about that, I'll show you how to get rid of that.

Below, you can see what it looks like when you go too crazy on the settings. It's very outlandish and kooky, but you don't really want to ruin the picture like that.
This screenshot below is from an earlier version, but it still serves its function here:

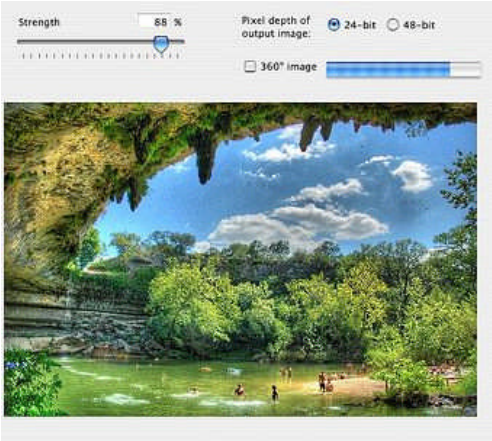


The next version shows settings that are just about right. In truth, I set the saturation too high. It came out a little too colorful.

The lighthouse

Wrath of the Norse Gods

Stuck in customs in space



After you tone map, save the image as a JPEG and then load up Photoshop. What, you're not good at Photoshop? It just takes some practice! There are so many good tutorials on the web. Just practice 30 mins a day or so and learn different tools. It's fun.

Next, I duplicated the background twice. Here is a high-level description of what I am going to do:

- Bottom layer: Super-detailed clouds
- Middle layer: Current picture with nice details
- Top Layer: Trees will be sculpted and made more dreamy.

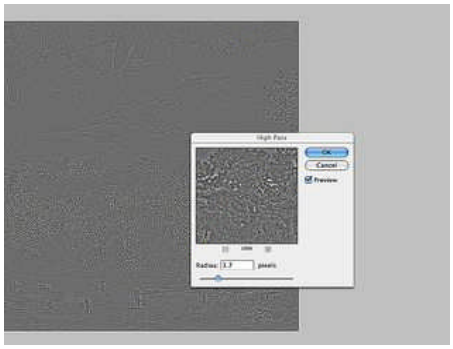
Then we will poke holes in the upper layers at various levels of opacity to see through to the bottom layers. Yes, you can use masking too, and that is what I normally do. But I find masking is hard to teach people, but erasing and poking holes is easy.

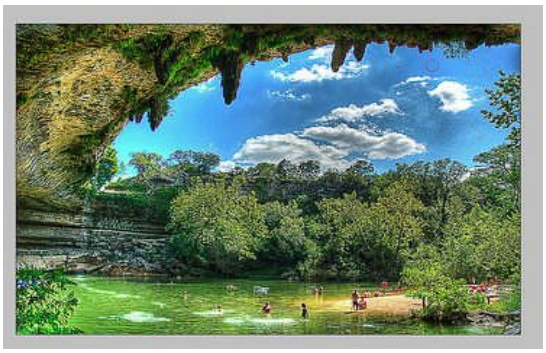
Please note that not all pictures get this treatment. It totally depends on the picture. In this one, it is great because it has some clouds that need some detail, it has trees that need less detail, and it has people/water than need average detail.

There are two ways to give details to the clouds. One is free using "Filter > Other > High Pass" and the other is using LucisArt. I prefer the second because it is faster and better, but here is the free way to do it.

Cloud detail method 1: High Pass

This is what I did. Select the top layer. Filter > Other > High Pass. Adjust the slider bar so you can barely see the edges. Press OK, then change that layer mode to Overlay. Note that it sharpens all the edges of the entire picture, including the clouds. That probably is not enough, so select that layer and duplicate it (apple-J) multiple times until you get some tasty contrast and details in the clouds. You will notice the rest of your picture starts to look odd - but after you are done, put the original background version on the top layer and "erase" through it to get to your detailed clouds. You will see that I Gaussian Blurred the middle layer as well to smooth out all the noise in the sky. Again, I strategically erased to make the proper sky layer come forward. The images of this process can be seen on the right.

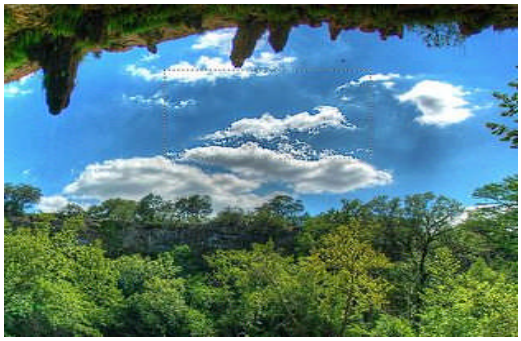




This is Ranjit. Ranjit's dream is that he gets to work in the factory again.Ranjit is currently sitting in front of an old restaurant on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. He used to work in a nearby factory, making aluminum parts, but he was replaced after his cataracts got too heavy and he began making mistakes. Ranjit does not like being a burden on his son, who doesn't come to see him much anymore. He says, motioning off into the distance behind me, "The boy is in Putrajaya, living in government house." He keeps reaching out in that direction, groping around, as if he is trying to find a light switch in the dark.

Morning mist at the lagoon

The barn in the storm



Detail method 2: LucisArt (preferred)

LucisArt is great. I am sure after you see this you will want to get it. I suggest you download the trial and give it a run. The trial is nice because you get a preview window that shows what all the sliders do in real-time. If you want to buy it, this is their webpage. (I don't know how such a cool art-related product has such a 1998 webpage, but I digress again! Oh and I just got a note from them with the following LucisArt Coupon Code: BAW1234)

Select the bottom layer and turn the others off. Go to Filter > LucisArt and adjust the settings to… well it depends on the clouds. Every cloud is different. I've really been learning my clouds. The settings for cumulonimbus are different than cirrus are different than mammatus are different than altocirrus, and the list goes on.

The two best filters in LucisArt are sculpture and exposure. In this case, I chose sculpture and put the top slider to around 3. The lower the number, the more details you get. That second radio button seems to be some kind of strange embossing level. The bottom slider adjusts the mix level. There is no magic setting. As I said, just play around with it.

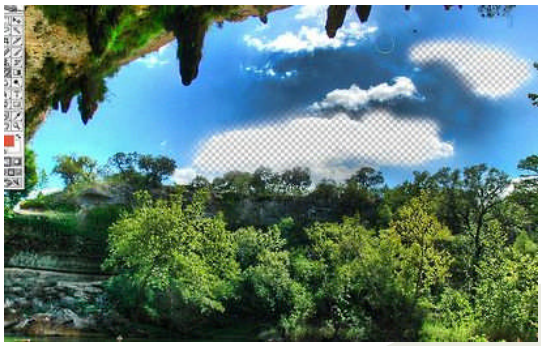
You will notice extra noise as well. don't worry about that now. We'll Gaussian Blur that out later.

Now I turned on the second layer. I used the selection box and cut a hole in it so you can see through to the nice cloud details. On this level, you will want to go ahead and poke holes by erasing all the clouds so you can see the detailed clouds from below. You may want to come back to the middle layer later (if you are even using this middle layer technique), and do some more erasing if you like the details more on the bottom layer.

Okay now let's work on the top layer. This is where we are going to make the trees look much better. The trees are already good, yes? But they can look better. Sometimes detailed trees are good, but sometimes they look better if some of the sharp details are decreased. It's not exactly blurring, but "sculpting" is likely a better word. So bring up LucisArt again and slide the top bar up above 25 somewhere. It is impossible to know the proper setting beforehand. Sometimes it's 25, sometimes it's 37, or 43, you just have to play with it. The mix is also variable. I think in this case I did around 30 or so.

In the picture below, you can see I cutaway half the picture so you can see the effect (I did the undo after the screenshot). The left side has the high sculpt setting and the trees look better (to me) than the super-detailed trees on the right. I won't get into my philosophies on photography, but too many details in a picture distract the eye.

In the next screen, you can see that I am on the top layer and using the eraser at 90% to erase the clouds. When I re-activate the bottom layers, the clouds will come through with nice details.



Then in the next picture you can see the selection all around the outside. It was feathered to about 40 for fading purposes. I then erased it at around 60% opacity to see some of the brighter details of

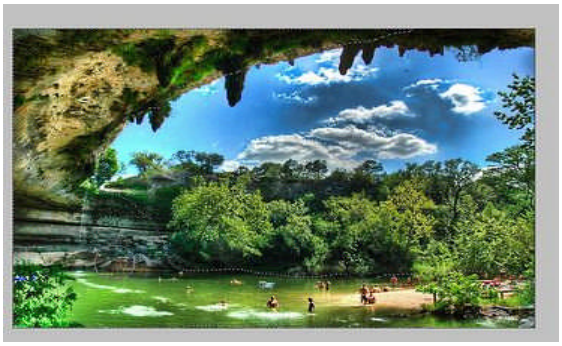
This is Vespucci. Vespucci's dream is to find his son and tell him important things. He twists his head quickly at me with a lost and quizzical look, and then he returns to a thoughtful gaze.

Vespucci is currently homeless and cannot remember where his son is.

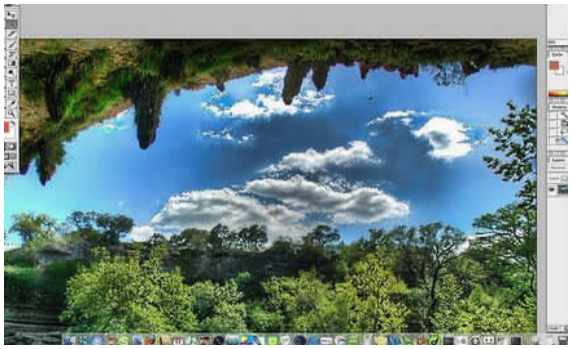
Light of Buddha

Unorthodox religion at Kievo-Pecherskaya Larva

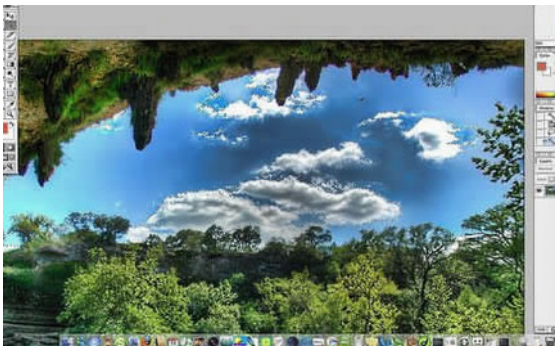
the lower levels. Again, this was particular to this specific picture.



Aha okay now the final step. This should always be a step for people that HDR skies. Luminosity increases in the tone mapping normally create noise. Noise is fine in most places and hardly noticeable except in the sky. So choose the Magic Wand Selector and keep adjusting the Tolerance until you have shift-clicked all the blue sky. Feather it by 2 or 3 and then choose Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur. Put that slider on 2.5 or so - whatever looks smooth.

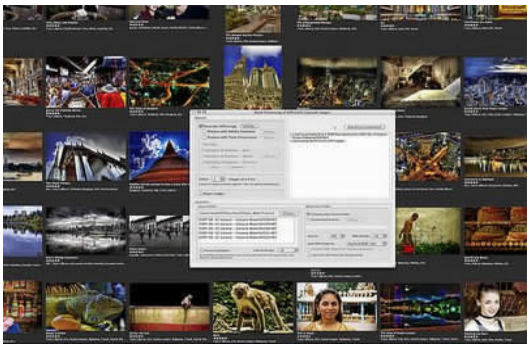


Then…tada – you are done. That is an hour of your life you will never get back, but let's hope you formed some good memories and skills to create more.



Single RAW for HDRing a Scene with Motion

The best way, in my opinion, is to use the hidden and undocumented Photomatix feature for processing a single shot. First, open up Photomatix 2.2 or later, then go to the Automate > Batch Processing. In there, just select one raw file and hit run. It will generate the HDR for you. You can see this dialog below. The only thing to do different than below is to just choose one of those RAW files (the .NEF files).



And here are a few more examples of HDRs from a single RAW file:

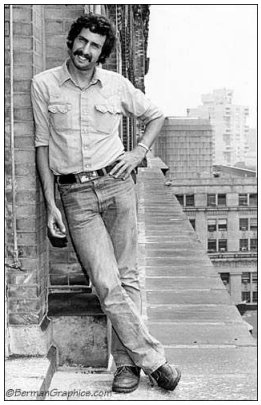
Considering a digital future

The eyes of Mother Teresa

Colors of Buddha

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

LEARNING: Selling Photography at Art Shows



Larry Berman has been selling his photographs professionally for over 30 years. He started in the 1970s when he photographed professional sports specializing in basketball, and was staff photographer for the ABA New York Nets. He also sold stock through The Image Bank stock agency for over 20 years. For the past 30 years he has been selling his art photography at juried art shows throughout the country. Working with computers since 1998, Larry was immediately taken by the creative aspects of digital imaging and formed an understanding for the promotional opportunities that the web had to offer. He designed and implemented a few conceptual web sites like ImageCompress.com where your choice of 20 different graphics programs can be compared in side by side windows for their ability to create compressed Jpegs. He also created a digital jury test web site ArtShowJury.com for the art show industry where artists can be juried from anywhere in the world and jury scores and jurors comments can be submitted by a form through e-mail. Larry also does beta testing for Adobe Photoshop and ACDSee. Always a prolific photographer, His latest body of work is shot digitally with an older 2 megapixel Nikon CoolPix 950 and can be seen at AlternatePhoto.com and ColorXrays.com. He markets those images successfully at art shows, from his various web sites and from through a major stock agency.

Selling Photography at Art Shows

You've been taking pictures for years. Maybe showing your prints to friends and family members and they constantly give you positive feedback and tell you how much they love your photography. Telling you that you should be selling professionally, but where to start. Or maybe you've visited a major art show like Coconut Grove, Ann Arbor or Cherry Creek, and have seen photographers selling their work. You've thought about setting up a booth in front of hundreds of thousands of people looking to purchase your photos. Art shows can provide a viable way to earn a living doing what you like best, taking pictures.

Ann Arbor 2002 in the rain

When I first started exhibiting at art shows over 25 years ago, I would hang the images I was most proud of. Through ego gratification and lack of experience at the bigger art shows, I spent my early years doing the shows that were under an hour drive from my New York City home, mostly mall shows, and selling my favorite pictures with moderate success. Enough to enable me to quit my day job and try doing art shows full time. What I didn't realize at the time was that there was a completely different type of art show out there. An art show where you could easily make as much money or more, in two days outdoors, that you could have made in four or five days sitting in a mall reading a book and eating.

At the better art shows we're talking about the sale of photography as a business, and in approaching it, realize that people do art shows on a very professional level for a living to support their families. The competition to jury into a show can produce some of the best photography you've ever seen. But of course you think that you have something of value to contribute. Real photographic art that people are just waiting in line to purchase.

If you're planning on applying to some of the better art shows, it's important to understand what other photographers are selling and how they go about displaying their work. Walk a major show and check out the competition. On a business level it's competition for the money, and on a photographic level it's competition for the space in the show.

Ann Arbor 2002

Thinking about what pictures to shoot

The importance of a unified body of work

One of the first things I learned when I started doing the better art shows was that it was important to create a unified body of work for two reasons. The first so as not to confuse the potential customer. When you have people standing in your booth thinking about making a purchase, there is a point that if they haven't made up their mind they walk away. The other is the "booth (display) slide". The application requirements of art shows are that you submit individual slides of your work (usually four or five) plus a slide of your display. The display slide will come across more professional looking if the body of work is unified.

If you're considering the art show market seriously, you're probably thinking about which

SIDEBAR:

"When I first started exhibiting at art shows over 25 years ago, I would hang the images I was most proud of. Through ego gratification and lack of experience at the bigger art shows, I spent my early years doing the shows that were under an hour drive from my New York City home, mostly mall shows, and selling my favorite pictures with moderate success. Enough to enable me to quit my day job and try doing art shows full time. What I didn't realize at the time was that there was a completely different type of art show out there. An art show where you could easily make as much money or more, in two days outdoors, that you could have made in four or five days sitting in a mall reading a book and eating"

images work well together or balance one another, and how to shoot new pictures to compliment those you already have. I've always compared the visual balance of a fully stocked display to the composition within a single image. The importance is easy to understand if you picture a row of 200 booths with people walking by. What is it that will make them stop and be drawn in to browse your images? Something has to grab them. One piece might be your "show stopper" but visually it will have more impact if that piece is your entire booth.

How to prepare your images for exhibiting

When starting out, the image preparation will take a lot of planning. Printing, mounting, matting and framing all have to be done on a professional level. Taking into consideration that some art shows require the photographer to do their own printing. Some art shows require the photographer to supervise the printing and some art shows don't make any such requirements at all on their applications. If you're not going to print your own, consider two resources. The first is a lab called Fine Print that only prints quantity at wholesale prices. It's one of the most widely used labs by photographers selling at art shows. The other consideration are digital prints by a machine called the LightJet, which is used by most major service bureaus. The LightJet uses conventional photographic paper that is exposed by a computer controlled laser and processed in normal chemistry. We know of a lab called Foto 1 that does excellent work and prices their quantity LightJet prints similar to quantity machine C print prices.

Materials and labor will become a factor in your selling price, as will competition from your peers. As a generalization, you can't spend $50 to print, mat and frame a 16x20 if you plan on selling it for $100. But you can if you're going to sell it for $300. But you can't sell it for $300 if the other photographers are selling that size for $200. The ultimate goal in the art show market is for your imagery can transcend the price barrier. To sell art to people who don't use price as a consideration. Or don't think about whether or not it matches the wallpaper or couch.

Understand that our methods and resources are based on years of preparing quantities of the same images, which keep the costs down, but we'll also recommend ways to get you started without a major investment.
The "print your own" controversy takes a twist with the introduction of the digital darkroom, which we'll explore later.

Aside from deciding whether to print your own, some choices you will face will be whether to hinge or dry mount. Choices in regular or acid free mat board or white core mat board as a compromise. Choices whether to single or double mat. Choices in the type of frames that you use. Remember to consider the overall look of your display. A single style frame will look better than a different frame for each different photograph. But if your body of work is eclectic, than you might consider framing on a piece by piece basis.

I own two mat cutters. A Speed Mat wall mounted mat cutter which is designed for production work, and a C&H cutter which I now use as a way of sizing my mat boards. I've also used a company called Dixie Matting to cut my mats when I was pressed for time and had some major shows coming up. They have very reasonable prices for any size quantity mats, either single or double.
You will need a source for framing supplies. I've used both M&M Distributors and United Mfrs Supplies (which also sells mat board) for my supplies. There are multitudes of companies that sell frames. Just check out the advertisements in Décor Magazine. I've used a small company called Florida Frames which sells quantities of wood frames to art show exhibitors at wholesale prices. High quality Nielsen aluminum frames can be purchased from most suppliers or Nielsen style aluminum frames can be purchased from companies like Frame Fit.

I use non-glare glass on my photography. I think it makes it look better on the display so as not to reflect everything in the street in front of the booth. It's a personal choice and doesn't work for everyone. Non glare glass costs twice what regular framing glass costs. I also back my framed photographs with fome cor which I get from my local glass distributor. Fome cor is an acid free backing and mounting board that is widely used in the framing industry. Both the fome cor and glass are much less expensive if purchased by the box, which will save you money if you've standardized your picture and frame sizes.

Some photographers base their sizes on the available materials. Because mat board and fore cor are available in 32x40 inch sheets, that 32x40 sheet can be cut to produce four 16x20's with no waste.
Besides the framed pictures to hang on my display, I also offer unframed photographs for sale. This serves three purposes. It gives you a less expensive item to prepare and sell. It generates money, and it lets you display different images that might not have the same theme as the ones hanging on the display. The unframed photos are matted and mounted, just like their framed counterparts, and are displayed in clear bags to protect the prints while people handle them. I get my clear bags from a company called Impact Images. It is a much easier alternative to shrink wrapping. Though slightly more expensive, the time factor makes it worth the extra expense. Bags are available in all standard sizes for two-dimensional artwork and have a flap with a peel-off adhesive strip to make sealing easy.

If your work is not sized conventionally, the bags can be purchased over sized and trimmed with the heat sealing wand from a shrink wrap machine. This is a good resource to know about. Even if you're not preparing photographs to sell at art shows, these bags can be used for all your finished work to show friends and family members so as to protect from damage or fingerprints.

"When starting out, the image preparation will take a lot of planning. Printing, mounting, matting and framing all have to be done on a professional level. Taking into consideration that some art shows require the photographer to do their own printing"

"Some art shows require the photographer to supervise the printing and some art shows don't make any such requirements at all on their applications"

Applying to an Art Show:

How to find an art show to apply to

Most exhibitors hear about shows from other exhibitors. It's like a closed community. I've seen a lot of the same people exhibiting for over 25 years. On the other hand, it's really interesting to see new and different work being exhibited so I feel that there is always room for newcomers. Aside from the individual state art listings, there are two important resources that give you the information needed to obtain an application for specific shows and how those shows rank on a national level. The first and most important is the Art Fair Sourcebook, put together by the veteran art show photographer Greg Lawler. The book is published annually and is an expensive but necessary resource if you're considering art shows as a profession. It lists the top 300 art shows in the country with an in-depth look at their requirements and feedback comments that have been accumulated by the author.

The other is Sunshine Artist Magazine, which is the closest thing there is to a trade magazine in the art show business. There are show reports listed by state, and the rear contains a listing of art show contact information that is listed by location and date. There are also advertisements throughout the magazine for companies that sell products that are used by art show exhibitors. If you're just beginning, a subscription to this magazine is a must read.

The first thing to consider is the application. Most art shows mail out their applications six to eight months in advance. It lists their requirements for admission and for display. It also lists the quantity of slides required, how to prepare the slides, the fees to enclose (both booth and application fee), the date it has to be postmarked by and the SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope). Some applications have room for a description of your work, either generally or by slide.

You can't just call up a show at the last minute and ask for a space. The show has invited a group of "experts" to jury the submitted slides on a preset date. But don't expect feedback on your work. Currently the art shows just put your slides in your SASE with a form letter telling you that you haven't been accepted but to feel free to apply again next year.

Not to disillusion you, but there are shows that I've been accepted to after applying to for over ten years. But those top shows maintain their reputation and the sales have made it worth while for the ten years of jury fees. If you're serious about selling your photography at art shows as a source of income, I recommend maintaining a list of the top shows and applying to them every year. Even though it's almost like playing the lottery, if you can produce a high quality of imagery, you have a chance of being accepted at some point. That's how I approach the business.

You've been accepted into an art show

My booth from 2001

Canopies, display racks, bins for unframed and your vehicle

Remember that I suggested walking a major show to see what it's all about? Have you noticed that all the booths had similar professional looking canopies? The first impression is that they're supplied by the show, but that's not the case. All the show provides you with is 100 square feet of display space. Outdoor booth spaces are usually a uniform 10 x 10 foot (or over) and those commercially made canopies are exactly that size. If your first starting out and don't want the initial expense, check with the show and see if they can recommend a company that rents 10 x 10 canopies. The drawback is that those rental units are either too flimsy or too dark inside. I use a canopy called the Craft Hut from Newton's Mobile Canvas. It seems to be the sturdiest canopy on the market. It's reasonably priced at approximately $700 but be prepared to spend more. I also have numerous options for it. One reason I chose that company was that they were willing to work with me in letting me customize the canopy for my needs. Besides the standard options like air vents and zippered awnings, I also have skylights built into the roof along the sides to light up the walls, instead of the standard skylight in the center. I'm selling photographs that hang on the walls, not jewelry in display cases in the center of the booth.

The walls of your booth that the photos hang on are not part of the canopy. There is additional cost here to either purchase commercially made "display racks", or to make your own. Armstrong manufactures the most professional looking racks. They are 6.5 feet tall and connect together to form a stable display within your booth. Having a friend who is a welder, I use homemade racks made from ½ inch electrical conduit and turkey wire that has a 1x2-inch grid. Then I had professional covers made so visually you can't tell that I didn't purchase them.

I also connect the racks together and to the corner uprights of the canopy (using heavy-duty cable ties) to give it additional stability. As an alternative, there are a few companies that make fabric walls that roll up for storage and hang from the frame within the most popular canopies. This has mixed blessings. The convenience of storage and lighter weight verses the lack of stability if in a windy situation and lack of flexibility in how you set your booth up. Another thing to consider is that they need the canopy frame to hang which is a fixed

"Most exhibitors hear about shows from other exhibitors. It's like a closed community. I've seen a lot of the same people exhibiting for over 25 years. On the other hand, it's really interesting to see new and different work being exhibited so I feel that there is always room for newcomers"

"The first thing to consider is the application. Most art shows mail out their applications six to eight months in advance. It lists their requirements for admission and for display. It also lists the quantity of slides required, how to prepare the slides, the fees to enclose (both booth and application fee), the date it has to be postmarked by and the SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope). Some applications have room for a description of your work, either generally or by slide"

10x10. If you are planning to do any indoor shows, the spaces are not always 10x10. You might have an 8x10 or 8x12 foot space and be unable to set up your canopy frame, therefore no walls to hang your photography.

Gary San Pietro uses this non commercial canopy and display

A chair is also an important piece of display equipment. Something comfortable, that you can sit in for hours and tall enough that you don't have to get up to speak to everyone that asks you questions. The chair can also double as a worktable with a board across the arm rests. I also use a homemade desk 12x15 inches by 42 inches high with a series of shelves to hold my sales materials. Credit card machine, notebook, clear bags that I put the customers purchases in.

I mentioned the weather and the importance of a sturdy canopy. A few things I've always carried are the swivel dog leash stakes (from any supermarket or pet store) and rope pieces to anchor into the ground. In the street I use a screw gun and dry wall screws. I used to carry weights made from PVC tubing filled with concrete until my display took the brunt of an 70 mile per hour thunderstorm wind and lifted over 10 feet off the ground before collapsing onto itself, with concrete weights in each corner. I still carry one weight for those shows that I have a corner booth. If on a corner, I try to leave the outer side partially open for people to see in, or walk through into my booth. That leaves the corner upright unsupported by the racks that usually connect to it so I attach a weight to help.

Display bins to show your unframed work need to be carefully planned out in design and size. Since you're only dealing with a 10x10 foot space, and expect thousands of people to see your work, you need to design the booth interior to your best advantage. I've designed my own display bins, and have purchased commercial bins that I've customized. Most art shows don't let you pull your bin out in front because it obstructs traffic. My display bins are all only 12 inches deep to maximize the interior booth space. Even the bin for my larger 22x28 matted photos is only 12 inches deep.

The box on the roof holds my display racks

So now you have a garage full of boxes of framed photographs and a display to hang them on to sell. How do you get them to the art show? I use 25 sheet mat board boxes to transport my framed photographs. If you don't own a van or have a friend who does, your only option is to rent one. If you're serious about pursuing the art show market as a career, eventually you'll end up purchasing a dedicated vehicle for your new business. Mostly everyone doing art shows either owns an extended van or a 10 foot high cube van the size of a UPS truck. The first time you leave something important at home, you'll see the need for owning a dedicated vehicle. I never unpack my van between shows and only replace the inventory that has sold.

Which are the good Art Shows?

The following is a rough guide for the best art shows (more shows and links will be added as I have the time). Coconut Grove Arts Festival, Winter Park Art Show (Orlando), Oklahoma City Festival of the Arts, Old Town Art Show (Chicago), 57th Street (Chicago), Boston Mills Art Show (Peninsula Ohio), Cherry Creek Art Show (Denver), Madison On the Square (Wisconsin), Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts (State College PA), Ann Arbor (four shows to choose from), Uptown (Minneapolis) Art Show, Longs Park Art Show (Lancaster PA), The Plaza (Kansas City), Saint Louis Art Festival (Clayton MO), Des Moines Art Festival.

Some additional tips

Our Recommendations – Are based on personal use and educated decisions learned from years of experience. But understand that there are additional choices for everything we've recommended. Artists are independent by nature and tend to do things their own way.
Web Site Promotion - Use your web site URL as your business name on your booth sign. We've found from experience that our web site clients get a substantial increase in traffic after art shows if they promote their web sites properly. We also have additional promotional tips for art show exhibitors on our web site. Your art show viewers are your biggest online customers.

Contacting People Interested in your Photography

We recommend collecting e-mail addresses of interested people in two ways. One is an e-mail collection form on your web site. Another is an e-mail collection form you have in your booth. The best way is to maintain a database of customer

"Not to disillusion you, but there are shows that I've been accepted to after applying to for over ten years. But those top shows maintain their reputation and the sales have made it worth while for the ten years of jury fees"

"I mentioned the weather and the importance of a sturdy canopy. A few things I've always carried are the swivel dog leash stakes (from any supermarket or pet store) and rope pieces to anchor into the ground. In the street I use a screw gun and dry wall screws. I used to carry weights made from PVC tubing filled with concrete until my display took the brunt of an 70 mile per hour thunderstorm wind and lifted over 10 feet off the ground before collapsing onto itself, with concrete weights in each corner"

information so you can send out a broadcast e-mail when. We use a program called World Merge for the PC or Max Bulk Mailer for the MAC to send out broadcast e-mail to interested people on a somewhat regular basis. Be aware that we've encountered a 40% bounce rate from collected e-mail addresses due to various reasons like people moving or changing their ISP. Some artists collect street addresses and send out postcards also. Modern Postcard offers good service and reasonable prices and will use your own artwork on the postcards.

Security - Leaving your work overnight in a secure canopy like the Craft Hut is something I've been doing for years. Think of it this way. Your artwork has much less value to others than it does to you. Don't use a moneybox. Use something that you can wear unobtrusively or use your pockets. I've never left any money in my booth overnight other than about $5.00 in change.

Credit Cards – Taking credit cards increases your sales. Taking American Express increases your high dollar sales. People who carry American Express cards will look for the sign in your booth before inquiring about a purchase. When I started taking AmEx, my sales immediately jumped. And I had been taking Mastercard and Visa for years. Contact us if you need to take credit cards and your bank won't let you open a merchant account. We may have a few resources for you. Personally I use the Nurit 2070 wireless credit card machine which I've owned for about six years. There are newer, smaller and more versatile machines available now.

Weather - Carry a weather radio. They only cost about $25 at Radio Shack and it will serve you well for years notifying you of impending weather conditions that can damage your display. Carry a few oversized white tarps and spring clips to fasten them to your display as needed. A towel can also help if your work gets wet. I've also had custom clear Craft Hut sides made so I can close up my booth in a heavy rain and still let people look at my work but not drip water on it.

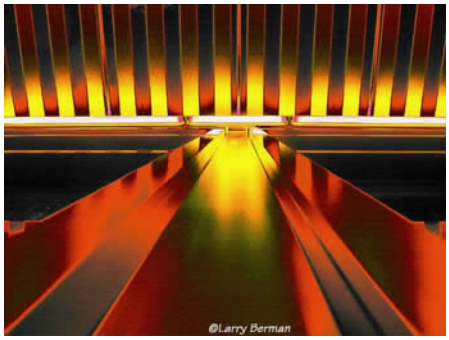
Lights – I've always carried a small box of six small clip-on lights and extension cords for emergencies. You never know when you'll be under a tree on an overcast day and the person next to you might have a generator. Or the food vendor nearby offers to share his electricity. As a matter of fact, before I sold my cube van, I carried a silent Honda 600-watt generator for just those occasions. For shows that I know will provide electric, I carry a 10 foot light bar and track lights for a classier looking presentation.

Transporting Your Photographs – As I previously stated, I use 25 sheet mat board boxes to transport my photographs. The boxes are 32x40x2 inches deep and can be easily cut down if needed. Most framed pieces will fit in that space and aluminum frames can fit two in a box back to back. Make sure to ask for the box when ordering mat board. If you're ordering larger quantities, ask for it to be packed in 25 sheet boxes so it can be shipped UPS. I've also purchased large quantities of empty mat board boxes so I don't have to worry about running out.

So, given the extent of the information we've made available to you, if you decide to give it a try, be sure to stop by Larry Berman's or Chris Maher's photography booth and say hello. Chris can also be found in his wife Annette Morrin's booth helping sell her jewelry.

Some of Larry's Fine Art Images

Watering Can Tulips



Tron

Additional Resources

Artshow photography forum – a lively forum with over 3800 participating photographers
Artshow photo

This article was reprinted with permission from the author. The original article can be found here.

OFF THE BEATEN PATH: Lomo Photography

Andy Thomas lives and works in London, but was born and brought up in the Wirral, near Liverpool. His father introduced him to photography as a child and his interest was reawakened in recent years with the encouragement of friends and family.

PBase Magazine: Let's start with the most frequently asked question "What on earth is lomo-photography" and 'why would one want to be a lomographer?'

I would say that lomography as a term has taken on a variety of meanings. It is probably most useful to look at it as a term covering a particular style of photography and also a range of film cameras.

Dee Estuary at low tide (LC-A)

The style is probably best described by the '10 golden rules' which encourage a spontaneous approach to photography, rejecting conventional ideas about what makes a 'good' photo. (http://www.lomography.com/about/)

In terms of the cameras there is of course the Lomo LC-A, but I have also seen the term applied to the use of other, mainly Russian cameras, and a range of toy and novelty cameras.

As to why, I suppose for me it was a way of coming at photography from a fresh angle. I started taking photos a couple of years ago with a basic film SLR and after a while got into a bit of a rut. I had started to get too preoccupied with trying to improve my technique in a conventional sense. While there is lots of good advice in books and magazines, it is all too easy to get wrapped up in the details of aperture, shutter speed, filters and composition. Lomography was a way to put all that to one side for a while and get back to what interested me about photography in the first place, which for me is the sense of capturing a special moment, and in doing so, conveying something of how you see the world.

Because the Lomo LC-A is so simple to use, you forget about all the technical things and just click away – it encourages a more spontaneous style, and although this might sound counter-intuitive, having less freedom in terms of the technical aspects of taking a photo can actually give you more freedom creatively speaking. For me, it was the perfect way to shake things up a bit, and it has definitely helped me to improve as a photographer, whether I am using my Lomo or a conventional SLR. Before long I had developed a bit of a Lomo habit and had picked up some of the toy cameras as well. I would certainly recommend lomography to anyone in search of a change or a challenge, especially if you find yourself obsessing about which filter to use on your SLR.

PBM: Would you consider lomography as a parallel art to, say, Portraiture, Landscape, and other forms of photography?

I think if you take the 10 golden rules to heart and pursue that line it can be seen as a parallel art to conventional forms. Certainly, if you look at the photos on the Lomographic Society International website, or indeed on PBase, they are very different to the style of photography that is prevalent in most photography books and magazines. Lomo photos often have an off-kilter, almost accidental feel. Especially with the Lomo LC-A, you get a slightly retro quality, with saturated colors and vignetting. Combine that with a free and easy approach to composition, and you can end up with something special, deserving of a niche of its own.

PBM: How serious are 'lomo-graphers' about the "10 golden rules"? How serious are you?

I think some lomographers take the '10 golden rules' pretty seriously, if the shots on the various forums are anything to go by. I suppose it does have the air of a manifesto, and there is a certain irony to having a list of 10 rules to tell people how to be more spontaneous and creative! It reminds me of the influential Dogme 95 manifesto that revolutionized Danish cinema; by denying themselves access to standard tools of the trade such as lighting, music and film sets, they managed to avoid and thereby challenge some of the clichés of moviemaking.

Scanning the horizon (LC-A)

There is always the risk of taking it all too seriously, and for me it is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. To be fair to the creators of the 'golden rules' though, the 10th rule

ON LOMO:

"I would say that lomography as a term has taken on a variety of meanings. It is probably most useful to look at it as a term covering a particular style of photography and also a range of film cameras. The style is probably best described by the '10 golden rules' which encourage a spontaneous approach to photography, rejecting conventional ideas about what makes a 'good' photo. (http://www.lomography.com/about/)"

Dee estuary sunburst (LC-A)

is ‘don’t worry about any rules’, and for me this rule trumps all the others. In terms of my approach, the basic nature of the camera lends itself to a more spontaneous style, so to be frank I don’t really think about the rules at all when I am using my Lomo
.

London park bench (LC-A)

PBM: Tell us a bit about the Russian Lomo camera – what makes it stand out and why is it considered to be a legend of sorts?

As I understand it, the Lomo LC-A was the Russian take on the compact 35mm camera, a camera for the Soviet masses to take their holiday snaps with. In the early 90s it was ‘rediscovered’ by some Viennese students who picked up a few LC-As on a trip to Prague. They were stunned by the results and started buying up stock, and popularizing the format by setting up the Lomographic Society. Production of the LC-A resumed at the Lomo factory in St.Petersberg, and the rest is history… The Lomographic Society also introduced a range of novelty cameras and sourced other obscure and discontinued cameras.

For me the LC-A stands out because of its small size, sharp lens and excellent automatic exposure setting. There is a zone focusing system with settings for 0.8m, 1.5m, 3m and infinity. For the most part I set the controls to infinity, so to speak, then start snapping. It is a great camera to have in your bag or coat pocket, and I also use it as a back up to my SLR, mainly shooting black and white on the SLR and color on the Lomo. I have tried the Lomo with black and white film with some success, but the best results seem to come with color film. I have been surprised by the image quality, and the results have been on a par with anything I have achieved with more conventional kit.

The Minitar lens is capable of handling extreme lighting conditions, so you can risk taking shots directly into the light with minimal flare, as you can see from some of the pictures here. It is a fast lens, and quite wide-angle too at 32mm, so it is well suited to landscape and architecture photography. You do get some vignetting, but personally I like the effect, and it is part of the whole Lomo vibe. Another bonus is that it performs well in low light and is great for night photography if you have tripod or can find a suitable surface to rest the camera on (see the park bench photo). The automatic exposure setting will just leave the shutter open for as long as is needed.

PBM: Do you use any other tools/camera for lomography other than the Lomo camera?

I have a few of the novelty cameras such as the pop-9, which has nine tiny lenses, producing nine almost identical images on the same frame, and the Supersampler, which has four lenses and shutters which are fired off in sequence over the space of a second or so. The lenses are cheap plastic, so don’t have the quality of the LC-A, but they are fun to use and handy to have in the camera bag ready for when you feel like mixing things up a bit.

PBM: How active is the lomographic community in general?

The community is pretty active on the Lomographic Society website, and there are also Lomo groups on various photo-sharing sites. I think that lomography is also pretty popular with photography and art students for all the creative reasons discussed above. The Lomographic Society also came up with the LomoWall concept, which is a particularly good format for community art projects; just give people a bunch of toy cameras and create a wall collage of the results. Because the cameras are easy to use and the golden rules emphasize the idea of spontaneity, it is a very accessible, value-neutral way of introducing people to photography. I saw one impressive example in London, the LomoWall at South Bank, which featured 4000 photos by local residents documenting their lives in conjunction with poetry as part of an arts festival.

PBM: Many people confuse lomography to only ‘shooting from the hip’ – how much of lomography is taken from the hip and what is the idea behind that?

Quite a few people do ‘shoot from the hip’, and I have tried it myself a few times. In essence it is just another way of encouraging spontaneity, and I suppose it is also a useful technique for taking candids without being too obtrusive. This idea might have emerged because the viewfinder is tiny and not a particularly accurate guide as to how your photo will turn out, so you don’t lose out much by just pointing the camera in the general direction of whatever you are interested in and

“The Minitar lens is capable of handling extreme lighting conditions, so you can risk taking shots directly into the light with minimal flare, as you can see from some of the pictures here. It is a fast lens, and quite wide-angle too at 32mm, so it is well suited to landscape and architecture photography. You do get some vignetting, but personally I like the effect, and it is part of the whole Lomo vibe”

Monolith in color (Smena)

Bruges or bust!

pressing the shutter. It is a bit of a departure from careful composition using the rule of thirds or whatever, and as such it fits in with the overall idea of freeing yourself from the 'tyranny' of conventional technique.

Beam me up Scotty (super sampler)

It is worth a try, whether with a Lomo camera or a conventional camera, but it is by no means a hard and fast rule. I certainly use the viewfinder on my Lomo most of the time, and I would say that most of the photos I take on my Lomo are actually quite conventional in terms of composition.

PBM: Which was your most memorable lomo-journey/event, so to speak? And why?

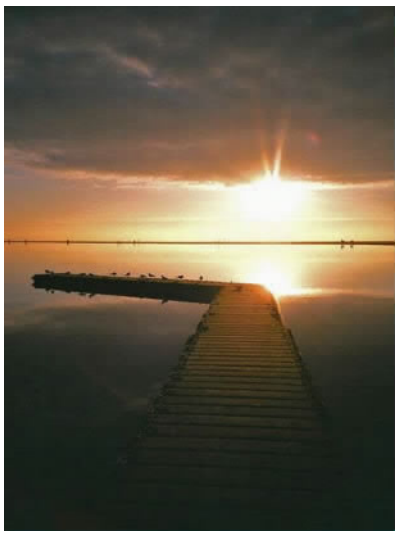
My most memorable lomo-journey coincided with a weekend visiting friends and relatives near Liverpool last September. I keep the LC-A in my bag and chucked in the Supersampler with a view to trying it out if time allowed. I grew up in the area, and whenever I go up I like to go for a walk around some of my old haunts. I ended up on the beach and got a few shots of some dramatic skies over the sands of the Dee estuary. The light conditions are often spectacular because when the tide goes out, miles of wet sands and mudflats are exposed, reflecting the sky.

The next day, I went down to see 'Another Place' by Antony Gormley, a sculpture installation on a beach at the mouth of the River Mersey, and I came away with some interesting shots of the statues and the shifting sands of the beach.

This weekend probably came closest to the spirit of the 'golden rules' in that I had my Lomo with me and used it spontaneously in the course of doing things I would have done anyway. The results were hit and miss, but I got some interesting shots, even when my Supersampler camera malfunctioned! I think the unpredictability of lomo cameras combined with the suspense of waiting to get your films back is all part of the fun, especially when most of us are getting so used to the instant feedback of an LCD screen.

Brighton jetty (LC-A)

Anthony Gormley statue - Crosby (LC-A)



Marine lake jetty sunburst (LC-A)

Nunhead cemetary – (pinhole)

Greenwich park (LC-A)

Whitby pier (LC-A)

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

THE: Photographer's Notebook

Shay Stephens is a professional photographer working in New York. He uses a stylish fusion of photojournalism, formal wedding, and studio photography. His commercial clients range from NASA, Ripley's Believe it or Not, to the Sony Corporation. His work is published in many languages around the globe via textbooks, magazines, television, and an array of digital media.

Editor's Note: The Photographer's Notebook is a new column that we are starting with this issue. This column will be authored by Shay and will contain a variety of topics related to digital photography, photographers and workflow in general. In this issue he talks about using Linux for your photography workflow and other tidbits.

The Photographers Notebook
by Shay Stephens

I disliked photo contests so much, I designed my own.

A new photography contest has started over at Dgrin (a photography forum). It's called the Last Photographer Standing. I got tired of contests that are more about restrictions and what you can't do, than they are about creative photography. So I designed my own from the ground up, and partnering with Dgrin, we have turned out a truly new and exciting contest. I started with the theme. I wanted something that would be inspirational, but at the same time also result in interesting photos to look at. So the theme is of a dual contrasting nature. We just finished the first qualifying round which was "Chilled or Steamy", and the one running now as I write this is "Stately or Humble". By incorporating the contrasting themes, a photographer has more freedom to pursue an idea. The different submitted work will illustrate the contrasting themes and result in a gallery of photos that are varied and interesting while still being thematically complementary. The viewers of the contest should be treated to a rich visual experience, and may themselves be inspired to enter. I certainly hope so!

The rules are simple, create an awesome photo. You can use Photoshop anyway you want to. The judging is done by a group of around 6 photographers from all walks of life. Some that I pick are quirky, some edgy, some technical, and some that are classical through and through. But they all have the same instructions. Judge which 10 photos mean the most to them. No other guidelines are given. No technical points sheet, no mathematical formulas to apply. Just gut feeling "this moves me" judging. And each round gets a new batch of judges to keep new ideas flowing, new directions, and unpredictable results.

Those who do enter the contest during one of the qualifying rounds may be selected as the top ten of that round and be eligible to move on and compete in a semifinal. There are four semifinals in the course of a year, and at the end of a year, there will be a Grand Finale. The prizes awarded by Dgrin for semifinal winners and the Grand Finale add up to over $25,000. And that number has been rising as various sponsors (Crumpler and Lensbabies as of this writing) step in to sweeten the pot.

So if you have been looking for a photography contest to stretch your skills and fatten your wallet, go check out the Last Photographer Standing contest.

How photographers can fall into the inventors trap
What is the inventors trap? Imagine if you will an inventor working in their basement on the next great widget. They finally achieve success, but now they feel they need to patent the invention and protect it from those who would steal the idea. The long road to paranoia sets in and they can't manage to show anyone the invention. Because they fear the theft of the idea, they keep it to themselves, and sometimes eventually die of old age without anyone knowing what it was they did or accomplished.

Did you know that photographers can fall into that same "fear of theft", and as a result, fail to get the recognition and visibility their work deserves? For fear of theft, some photographers lock their work up behind so many barriers to viewing that few people get a chance to see what they are capable of. Some photographers become so paranoid, that people simply linking to their photos sets off a wave of "pirate" accusations that quickly serves to alienate themselves. They plaster big warning signs all over their website stating that any copying will result in the worst penalties mankind has ever devised. "Oh they must be fun to work with!?!?" is the thought going through many peoples minds.

If you think of small web sized photos as shareable "free samples", you may find that your visibility and popularity grows in direct proportion to the number of your photos floating around out there. Allowing people to share your publicly available work frees your mind from thinking everyone is out to get you and steal your stuff. You start to see people as potential clients instead of dirty thieves. If you have work on the web, then you are already sharing the photos anyway, at least technically, since the photo has to be copied to their hard drive to view, so why not go the extra step and "mentally" allow sharing too. Give it a try, think of it as a marketing experiment. Open some or all of your web sized photos up to sharing. Put a small attractive watermark on them so people can get back to you if they are interested, and see if it doesn't result in an increase in interest and name recognition.

POST-IT NOTES:

"What is the inventor's trap?

Imagine if you will an inventor working in their basement on the next great widget. They finally achieve success, but now they feel they need to patent the invention and protect it from those who would steal the idea. The long road to paranoia sets in and they can't manage to show anyone the invention. Because they fear the theft of the idea, they keep it to themselves, and sometimes eventually die of old age without anyone knowing what it was they did or accomplished"

Flash Longevity

I have been using Sunpak 555 flash units for a number of years now and have been happy with them. But I have noticed that they start to fail after about a year at my level of usage which is around 30k-50k flashes. They just start slowing down in the recycle rate at an ever increasing rate and/or stop flashing reliably when triggered.

So I wanted to search out and find out if this was typical or not. I have searched the Internet trying to find longevity reports for flash units and really have not found much of anything useful. So if you know of something, please contact me. How many flashes are you getting out of your flash unit before it dies or it stops flashing consistently? Let me know the make, model, and estimated life span you are getting as a measure of the total number of flashes before it starts behaving badly. I will hopefully be able to present some results in my next article.

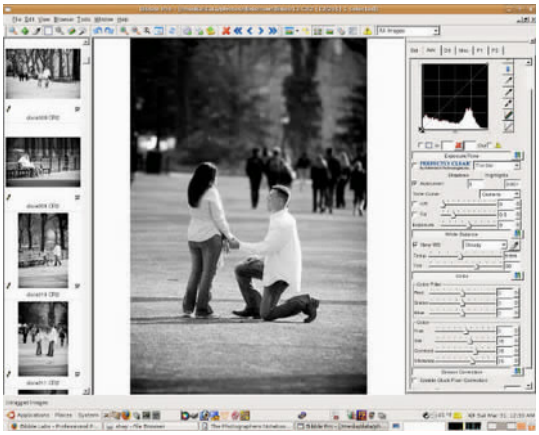
Linux Based Photography

There is a wealth of information out there about editing photographs on Windows and Mac platforms, but not so much about Linux. So I hope to rectify that here with information that may be beneficial to the Linux based photographer or those simply contemplating a move to Linux.

As a wedding photographer coming from a long and heavy Windows background, I wasn't very fluent or capable with Linux when I first started investigating it last year. I tried out a lot of versions until I came to Ubuntu Linux. Ubuntu was the first version of Linux that worked on both my desktop and laptop, and that sealed the deal for me. I then began dual booting between Ubuntu and Windows XP. And little by little, I started moving more and more work over to Ubuntu until one day late December 2006 when I installed a new sound card in my desktop, Windows decided *it* didn't like that, and told me I had to get permission from Microsoft to keep using my computer. Well I got tired of doing that all the time, and can't really afford the unreliability this introduces into my computer, so I denied Windows' demand, and instead backed up all my data before the 3-day shut-off date expired. The switchover was complete, and I have not looked back since.

Ubuntu can be tested out painlessly by downloading the "Desktop Edition" and burning the iso image to CD. Once you are done, just pop the CD into your drive and reboot the computer. It will start up and load the operating system entirely into memory without touching your existing hard drive, so no permanent changes take place to your computer. You can test it as long as you like. Once you decide to install it to a hard drive, just run the install program on the desktop and it will step most people through the setup in about half an hour. A new version of Ubuntu, 7.04 code named "Feisty" is due out in April, so it might be ready by the time you read this article. I have been testing the beta, and I already know I will be upgrading to it as soon as possible. In fact, you may want to just wait for Feisty if you have not used Ubuntu or Linux before. Your experience will likely be much better with the new version, due to the many multimedia enhancements added.

My sparkly new Linux computer now runs a semi-different lineup of software than it did with Windows, instead of Adobe Bridge for editing RAW files, I use Bibble Pro 4.9.5, instead of running Nero to burn CD's and DVD's, I use a program called K3b. K3b, a KDE based CD/DVD burning program just recently made the 1.0 level (congratulations to them) and it is the only Linux burning program that I know of that offers data verification, something I personally can't live without. K3b really is the best Linux based burning program I have used and has been a great replacement for the Windows based Nero which was my main burning application in Windows. Interestingly, there is a Linux version of Nero called NeroLinux, but it hasn't worked as well as K3b for me and certainly doesn't look as nice as K3b. NeroLinux looks like a throwback to the stone-age of computing (10 years ago!), I know that is petty, but there it is. If you are not as petty as I am and want to use NeroLinux despite its ugly face, you can do so without charge if you already have a Nero license. Just enter your key into NeroLinux and away you go. If you don't have a key, you can buy one for $19.99 from the NeroLinux webpage.

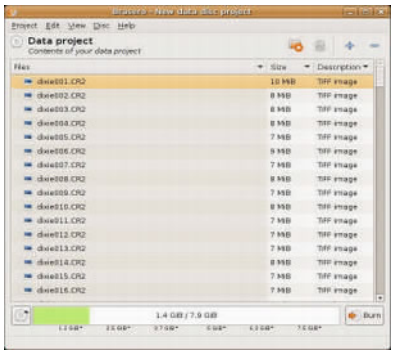


Note: At the last possible minute I just discovered a GNOME based burning application called Brasero and had to enter it into this article. It too has data verification, much to my surprise and relief. I have not used it extensively yet, so I can't really compare it with K3b in depth right now. If you don't want to use a KDE based program, assuming you are running a GNOME desktop, then Brasero looks like it might be just the thing. It has a very simple layout, no bells or whistles, but if what you need boils down to simply burning a CD or DVD then this application can get the job done quickly efficiently and make sure the burn completed successfully, something any modern burning app needs to do. Brasero has not reached the 1.0 maturity that K3B has, but it does run stable for me at this point.

There are a few Windows based programs I still need to run for lack of better Linux based alternatives. Some notable examples being Photoshop 7, MemoriesOnTV, and Star Wars Jedi

"There is a wealth of information out there about editing photographs on Windows and Mac platforms, but not so much about Linux. So I hope to rectify that here with information that may be beneficial to the Linux based photographer or those simply contemplating a move to Linux"

Knight II[1]. All of which I am happy to report are working very well in a program called Wine. The makers of Wine describe the program as a Windows compatibility layer that makes the Windows based program you want to run think it is running in Windows. Wine still isn't at the 1.0 level of completeness, but it is close enough now that Photoshop 7 and many other Windows based programs run very well.



Screenshot of Brasero

The first task for me when I made the switch in operating systems was to find a RAW editor I could use. Right now that editor is Bibble Pro 4.9.5 from Bibble Labs. It took me a little bit of time to get used to the interface and ways of accomplishing tasks (coming from an Adobe background), but I have been able to ultimately do all my RAW work with Bibble as efficiently as I did with Adobe Bridge. The nice thing about Bibble is that it runs on Windows, Mac, and Linux platforms so you really have the most freedom to use whatever system you want. If you think you may want to switch operating systems, you can start using Bibble now on Windows to get familiar with it, then when you make the switch, you are light years ahead of the learning curve when you use Bibble in Linux.

Some of the program highlights in addition to standard RAW editing are spot healing and patching, Noise Ninja, lens distortion correction, vignette control, and B&W conversions (shown in screen shot).

The Bibble support forums are very helpful too and there are various how-to's, documentation, and videos to help out the newcomer to Bibble. Don't be shy about signing up to the forum, they will treat you well.

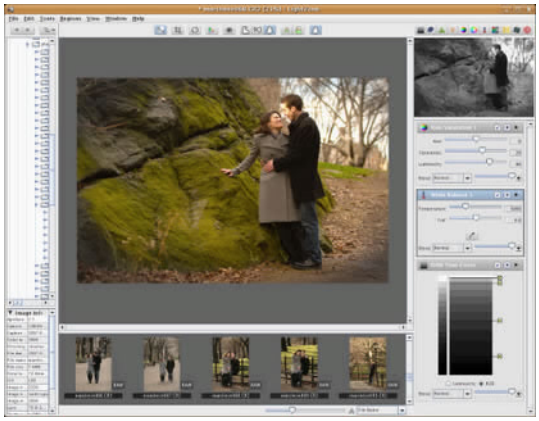
The Noise Ninja capability in Bibble is limited if you don't have a Noise Ninja license, but if you do have one, or purchase the Home Standalone version, then all the features open up for use. Just be aware to use Noise Ninja sparingly, it will really slow things down if you apply Noise Ninja to every photo in the folder you are working on.

The development of Bibble is very active and useful features are being added all the time. The price is affordable too, currently $129.95 for the Pro version and $69.95 for the lite version.

Another interesting RAW editing program that just entered my radar is LightZone, it has a very unique interface that combines the idea of the zone system and correction layers. It can also do spot healing and cloning. It is lacking a few key features for me, but they say the next update or two will likely take care of that.

LightZone feels easy and intuitive to use once you become familiar with the tools that are available. The interface as you can see has a simple layout and doesn't get in the way. And yet, a photographer can stack up a very complicated set of adjustments and corrections to each photo. Many users will be able to use it as is right now for all their needs.

If I were to try and describe LightZone in one word it would be "organic". It is one of those programs that just feels like it is not so technical and mechanized but more analog, fuzzy, and natural. Not in a bad way mind you, but more like the results you get have more of a hand crafted look and feel to them as if you were creating the images in a darkroom by hand. Beware, once you try the program you may get hooked by it!



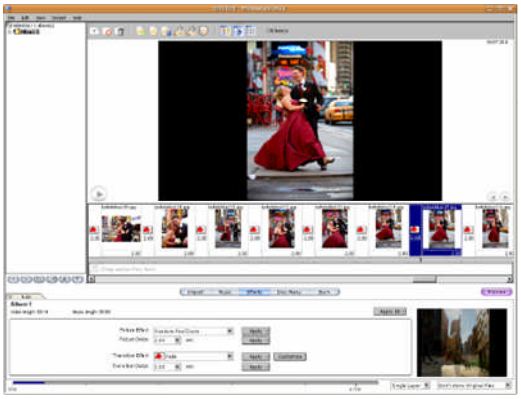
The Linux version is currently being offered at no cost, the Windows and Mac versions run $249.95 for the full version and $149.95 for the basic version.

When it comes to creating slide shows in Linux, no native Linux applications really stand up and say "Use me!". So the one I am using right now is a Windows based program called MemoriesOnTV 3.1.8 from CodeJam. It has recently started working via Wine and I am creating some very nice slide shows with it.

MemoriesOnTV is also in active development, so it pays to check their website every now and again to see if there are any updates. Bug fixes and the occasional added feature find their way into most updates. The latest being "clipshows" and "multiple slides".

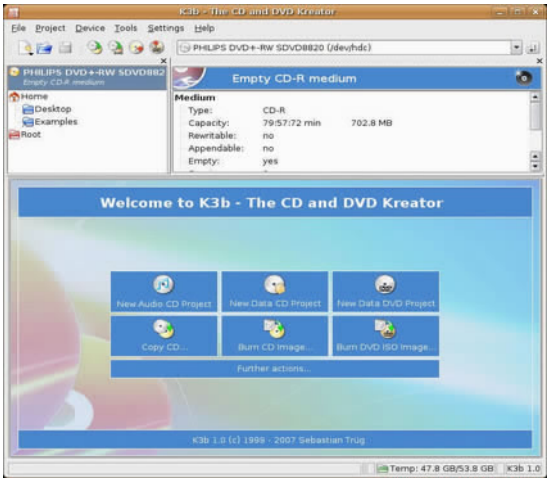
"For everyday photo editing, Gimp, Krita, and the others do a very good job, and the upcoming version of Gimp, 2.4 will have a healing brush and other great tools you may be used to from Photoshop. I am currently using Gimp to batch process my full size images into web sized versions that I can upload to my website. If you have previously been using the scripting capability of Photoshop, you will enjoy the ability to create scripting in Gimp too as the automation capabilities really shine when under scripting control"

[1] *All work and no play makes Shay a dull boy ;-)*



The basics of the program are simple and pretty straight forward, you add the photos you want, then apply music and transitions as desired, then render the video. There are a lot of options and customizations allowed, so you can tailor the slide show to be as simple and elegant as you want or as flashy and glitzy as your eyes can handle. MemoriesOnTV can be purchased from the CodeJam website and runs $79.99 for the pro version and $49.99 for the home version.

You can generate a disk image with MemoriesOnTV and use K3b to burn it to a DVD. If you are using a separate DVD authoring program, you can have MemoriesOnTV just generate mpg files instead. I use a DVD authoring program called 'Q' DVD-Author, so I opt for the mpg file generation. 'Q' DVD-Author is a bit finicky to use, so I am not yet recommending it to the average Joe. Although if you want complete control of the DVD menu structure and layout, it is your best bet and well worth the effort to learn to use it.



Screenshot K3b

K3b the CD/DVD burning program just recently made the 1.0 level (congratulations to them) and it is the only Linux burning program that I know of that offers data verification, something I personally can't live without. K3b really is the best Linux based burning program I have used and has been a great replacement for the Windows based Nero which was my main burning application in Windows. Interestingly, there is a Linux version of Nero called NeroLinux, but it hasn't worked as well as K3b for me and certainly doesn't look as nice as K3b. NeroLinux looks like a throwback to the stone-age of computing (10 years ago!), I know that is petty, but there it is. If you are not as petty as I am and want to use NeroLinux despite its ugly face, you can do so without charge if you already have a Nero license. Just enter your key into NeroLinux and away you go. If you don't have a key, you can buy one for $19.99 from the NeroLinux webpage.

I mentioned using Photoshop 7 via Wine. There are Linux alternatives to Photoshop 7 such as Gimp, Krita, etc, but the text layout capability is currently very primitive in those programs. So when I need to create DVD box art, photo books, etc, I still need to rely on Photoshop 7 to get it done efficiently.

For everyday photo editing, Gimp, Krita, and the others do a very good job, and the upcoming version of Gimp, 2.4 will have a healing brush and other great tools you may be used to from Photoshop. I am currently using Gimp to batch process my full size images into web sized versions that I can upload to my website. If you have previously been using the scripting capability of Photoshop, you will enjoy the ability to create scripting in Gimp too as the automation capabilities really shine when under scripting control. More about that though in a later article. Until then, check out the Resource Repository for links to the companies and products mentioned in the article.

My Mail Box

If you have questions or comments you can send them to me here:
http://www.shaystephens.com/contact.php

Resource Repository

http://www.dgrin.com - Dgrin photography forum
http://www.lastphotographerstanding.com/ - Dgrin photography contest
http://www.crumplerbags.com/home.php- Crumpler bags
http://www.lensbabies.com/ - Selective focus SLR lenses
http://www.tocad.com/flash/555.html - Sunpak 555 flash unit
http://www.ubuntu.com - Linux operating system
http://www.bibblelabs.com/ - Bibble RAW editor
http://www.lightcrafts.com/linux/download.php - LightZone RAW editor
http://www.winehq.org/ - Windows compatibility layer
http://www.k3b.org/ - CD & DVD burning
http://www.codejam.com/ - MemoriesOnTV slide show creator
http://www.picturecode.com/ - Noise Ninja noise reducing software
http://qdvdauthor.sourceforge.net/ - DVD authoring program
http://www.nero.com/eng/NeroLINUX.html - NeroLinux CD/DVD burning
http://www.gimp.org/ - the GNU Image Manipulation Program
http://www.koffice.org/krita/ - Krita painting and image editing

FRIMPONG: The Travelling Bear

Let me introduce myself to you, Ladies & Gentlemen. I'm Frimpong the Travelling Bear. It's important for me to underline the fact that I'm a real travelling bear, not a virtual character. I travel concretely in space and distances, I take real means of transport and I visit really all the places, that I'm going to show you here with my pictures. I'm English, but I feel a citizen of the world. My personal rules are few, I tend to avoid all organized tours and I offer myself all possible comfort. But I'm also flexible and adventurous and curious, like all good travellers, so I can adapt myself to nearly all situations. Many fellow photographers, from all over the world, have already invited me to their countries. So, as you can notice, every gallery of mine has a different author and, all together, they are a little symbol of friendship among nice people, who don't know each other personally, but have chosen kindly to take part in this project.

It was the beginning of summer 2004 when two PBase members, David G. (Bygaspo) and Marisa D.L. , had an idea (vaguely inspired by a French Movie "Amélie") of a project potentially involving international cooperation from PBase members all over the world.

The idea was to use a stuffed toy to symbolize the pleasure for travel and adventure, around the globe, with each adventure having a photo gallery. Each journey would be to a different photographer, allowing them to "show of "their country to the little visitor, as if he was a real character, received as guest at their home for a while.

David found the ideal character for the role in a toy shop in London, a teddy bear with a red tie, and called him "Frimpong".

Frimpong in Madrid (by Michaval)

It was necessary to start the saga somehow; Frimpong was still a total unknown little guy!
So he was sent to his first host, one of Marisa's friends, living in New Zealand. Frimpong got his own personal account on PBase, his email address and his first gallery was posted.

Incredibly the reaction was immediately much more positive than expected and Frimpong started receiving invitations from various photographers, who had seen the first photos, introducing the adventures of the Travelling Bear.

So a small staff of volunteers was created to organize Frimpong's schedule, to keep in contact with his hosts and to coordinate the whole project.
Little by little the original project has taken a larger dimension and the venture has progressed on regular basis.

After more than two years, Frimpong is still travelling all over the world; he receives several new invitations every month.
It can sound rather absurd, but, during this time Frimpong has developed a personality and all the wonderful people (more than 40 so far) who have already joined the project, have spontaneously perceived some of Frimpong's character, helping the whole play being more lively.

It's rewarding to realize how adult people are still able to let their fancy fly and to listen to the voice of the child that is still present inside all of us.
Many photographers having acted as hosts to Frimpong told us they found the opportunity of a different approach to photography and with other members of their family who had not paid too much interest to that before. We have been informed of enthusiastic wives sewing clothes for the visitor Bear, of children encouraged to study world geography following on an atlas all Frimpong's new destinations. Just for these reason we feel totally pleased with the effect of the Frimpong project.

A few biographic notes on the Travelling Bear now, just to remain in the kingdom of fancy, which is so nice to visit.

His full name is Frimpong Bear he's also known as "Frimpong The Travelling Bear".
He's a Londoner and his official abode is in Bear Street WC2 – City of Westminster – London (Incredible but true, the street really exists and he could not live anywhere else, of course).
He's an adult character, nothing to do with a little baby bear. He's cultivated and urbane and has certain knowledge of literature.
He's a "Bon Vivant" with quite an excessive propensity for beer (indeed any alcoholic drink if beer is not available).
He is charming to all ladies, not necessarily just bear ladies.
He's curious and an individualist, the prototype of the lonely traveller.
He's funny and adventurous, a little short tempered on occasion, but basically he has a sweet heart.

One of his odd peculiarities is his strange relationship with birds, during all his trips he has always tried hard to go bird watching, but he cannot see any birds.

FRIMPONG'S JOURNAL:

Frimpong in Bavaria (Andres Buchner)

Frimpong in Estonia (Anton Klink)

Frimpong in Capri (Alessandro Catuogno)

His usual mode of travel is in a cardboard box, where his hosts put him to send him by regular mail to the next destination.

Frimpong in Mexico (by Wendy O)

Frimpong, who likes a comfortable life, hates cardboard boxes and often, when he sees one, he gets furious.
Twice so far he has travelled by plane first Class, as he would like to always travel, thanks to two of his hosts, who have taken him directly to the cabin on a plane and have treated him to a real VIP Passenger experience.

Interestingly Frimpong has received invitations not only from PBase members, but also from non-members who had seen him whilst browsing his PBase galleries.

Frimpong has even been recognized in the street by passers by, who had seen him on Internet, proving how well known and popular PBase site is on the web.
On one occasion a middle aged lady approached shyly a photographer, who was taking pictures of Frimpong and asked him "I'm sorry, I think this is Frimpong the bear I have seen on Internet, isn't it? " and she asked if she could have a photo taken with him to show her grandchildren.

Frimpong has already visited over 30 different countries all over the world. He has already been in all continents, except Africa, but this gap is going to be filled soon, since he has just received an invitation to Egypt.

All the photographers who have taken part in the project so far, even though they don't know each other personally, have created mutual links, sending each other the travelling bears, getting information about his arrival, exchanging news and little items.
Frimpong has reached his original goal, which was making of him a token of friendship and a symbol of communication.

Every new gallery of Frimpong saga shows a different town and different adventures, the authors can always add a personal style and they give also interesting details on their own country, speaking of daily life, habits, and traditions.

The photographers who ask to have Frimpong as guest are not selected according their technical skills for photography, but only according to the where they live (Frimpong doesn't go to the same town twice – at least not yet!) and their willingness to understand the spirit of the game.

So Frimpong is equally happy to be invited by really good and well known artists of PBase and by less professional amateur photographers.
The purpose is not to post formal perfect example of excellent photography, it is about the contents, the amusing and friendly side of the whole matter.

Frimpong has already received amazing display of sympathy and affection (we know, we know, it's a teddy bear, but it's more concrete than Santa Claus, so why not?).
He was the only PBaser officially invite to Emily and Slug's wedding.

Frimpong in Emily and Slug's wedding (by Kathy)

Recently he was received by the Mayor of Teylingen (Holland), who posed officially with him and allowed Frimpong to wear the silver chain which is the symbol of his office.

During his stay in Washington D.C., Frimpong had the chance to be invited to The White House Christmas Party, he was at the buffet and posed with the members of The White House staff, the only thing which prevented him to meet also President Bush and Mrs Bush…was the presence of …the First Dogs. When Frimpong with his hosts was entering the Blue Room, where the First Couple were awaiting guests, the security team blocked Frimpong, because it seemed his presence could potentially provoke an incident with the First Dogs. Nevertheless Frimpong was allowed to get into the Blue Room and get his photo taken there, but only when The President and the dogs had left

Frimpong in San Francisco (Jeanne H.)

Frimpong with the Mayor (Photo of Marjan Schavemaker)

Frimpong in Greece (Iannis Rigakis)

Frimpong at the White House Christmas party (by Tony Young)

Frimpong has already been to USA (several times), to New Zealand, to Australia, to Brazil, to Mexico, to Germany, to Spain, to Thailand, to Cambodia, to Austria, to Italy, to Greece, to Wales, to Estonia, to Lithuania, to Sweden, to Belgium, to Holland and to many other places, which you can discover, if you like, giving a look at his pages on PBase.
He has been protagonist in many funny and nice stories. There have been misadventures too, as when he became lost in Russia, because of the postal system, however he was miraculously found only a couple of months later. Another time he was kidnapped by a dog and found again, all licked, under a bush in his temporary host's garden

His staff takes care of his galleries layout and tries to synchronize all the news.
There is actually a specific gallery, called "Frimpong's news" where all the recent happenings are posted and all his new destinations are mentioned on real time.

What is the role of photography in all that?

The main role is to give a visual description of places and situations, and it gives many people an interest in trying a different approach to the possibilities of digital photography, related with other communication media.

Frimpong has been object of some critical remarks too but they have been really very few.
In most of cases the author of negative comments has not fully understood the thinking behind the project, and had simply thought that all Frimpong's galleries were taken by the same photographer, an adult, obsessed by a teddy bear…
Of course, said like that, it might sound disturbing, but it often happens that criticism is too quickly expressed, without taking the time to understand what is really going on.

Frimpong has also received, in his mailbox, private messages of apologies, when it had been clearly explained that the photos in every single gallery has been taken by different photographers and the spirit of the project was a group work.
One person who had misunderstood all at the first sight, later asked then to join the project, and it became an enjoyable little experience for him as well.
We have also been told, a few PBase members consider it unfair that Frimpong's galleries receive votes and appear in the Popular page. As it has been stressed several times also in PBase forums, PBase members express their liking for a gallery by a vote to make it more visible and popular, without any strict technical judgment of values. It's a matter of "Popular galleries" not of "Absolute Art", also because the concept of art is never absolute, but relative and related with personal sensitiveness, tastes and many other factors.
Frimpong is not as presumptuous as to only to display artistic photos, mostly because the authors are different and the technical level is different too.
That said two professional photographers, besides many talented amateurs, have joined Frimpong's saga so far. Leaving us to believe he deserves his popularity.
It's logical that all the people, who have already been part of the project or are going to, follow his adventures and support him. It's part of a deserved and honestly gained popularity.
It's play and it's sad when people miss the difference between play and reality and take too seriously what should be considered just a space of fancy and friendship.

There is no commercial side to the project. "Frimponger's" have always given their contribution simply for the fun of it and have paid personally and graciously the little expenses necessary to send him travelling. Frimpong now travels by registered mail to ensure his safety.

Frimpong in Thailand (by Daniel A.)

We have received a number of requests from visitors (not PBase members) asking about the possibility of buying merchandise, gadgets and so on. But, as stated, Frimpong is not a commercial organization and we have not any intention of trying to cash in on him.

We don't know how long Frimpong's adventures will keep on. Perhaps they will come to an end and remain only as memories of a nice experience for many people who would have never had a chance to get in touch with each other, if they had not been linked by the Travelling Bear.

For the time being, however, Frimpong still has several countries to visit and many new friends to meet.
Anyone who would like to know more details about the project, and possibly join in, can email Frimpong's Staff at this email address.

Opossum1415@hotmail.com

All of Frimpong's galleries can be viewed at http://www.pbase.com/frimpong

Frimpong in Cairo (Mostafa Moftah)

Frimpong tries American Football (by Tony)

Frimpong goes to Washington (by Tony)

PARTING SHOTS

Parting Shots

First, I want to congratulate Arjun and his wife Shefali. Their baby boy, Ved, was born on Feb 19, 2007 and we are all very excited for them! I was surprised they did not name him *Nikon* or something along those lines, but we will forgive them!

Ved – a smile for the Paparazzi

Second, our next issue is going to be number ten and we are very excited. If you would like to write for us or have a great idea for an article, please e-mail us at magazine@pbase.com and we will make every effort to respond. We'd love to hear from you, especially if you would like to write!

Finally, as Arjun mentioned in the editorial, I am currently living in Washington, D.C. For those who have been to our nation's capital and have traveled via metro, you might know that while the tubes below ground are relatively clean (compared to other subway systems), I would by no mean lick the floors. By now you are probably wondering where I am going with this.

A few weeks ago I rode the escalator down to the DuPont Circle train stop. On the platform I saw a man lying on the floor. As I got closer, I realized he was not homeless, nor was he there to take a nap (as I would have loved to do at that moment, after a long day at work). Rather, he was holding a camera while waiting for the train to come. Rotating between different positions, all inches from the disgusting floor, this man was on his stomach and knees trying to obtain a perfect shot.

My first thought: gross. My second: Homeland Security. But my third thought was that this was one devoted man with a camera. Who ever he was, he was there to get a shot. Maybe it was for a gallery in SoHo, or perhaps even for his PBase web page, but whatever the purpose, the mission clearly was to create a great photograph.

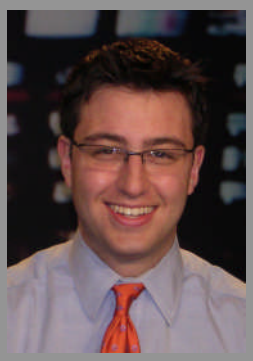
Without sounding like a preacher, we should all be like that man, getting down and dirty, if needed, to get that great photograph. He was seemingly the quintessential role model for the rest of us. I get on the train and wait for him to follow behind me. Instead, the doors close and he keeps on snapping, waiting for the next train.

Eric Kuhn
www.pbase.com/ejkphoto

PBASEMAG GANG

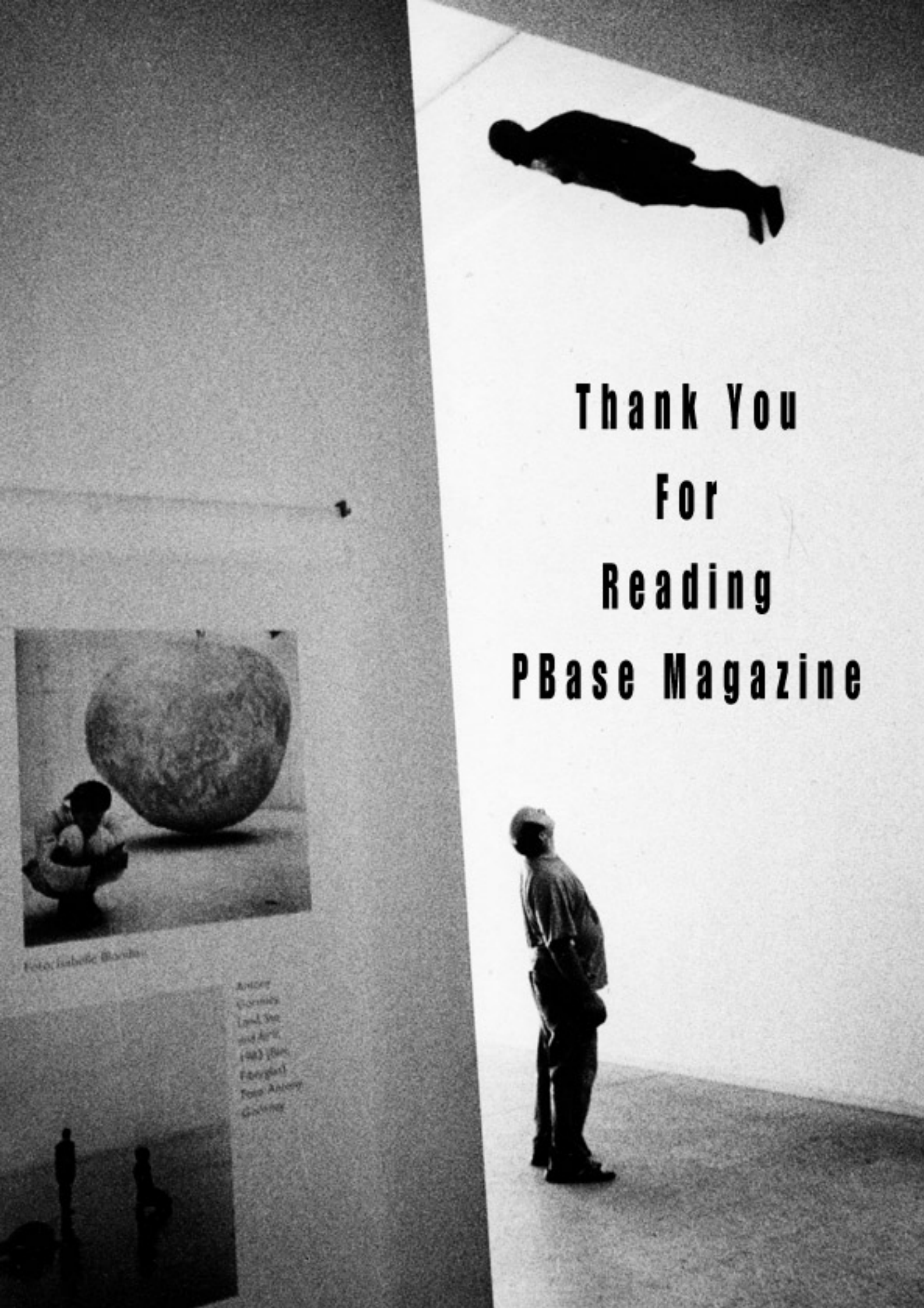
Gary Blanchette,
Cover Design
www.pbase.com/gpaai

Wanda Bates, proof reading
www.pbase.com/slowpokebill



Eric Kuhn, co-editor
www.pbase.com/ejkphoto

Arjun Roychowdhury,
co-editor
www.pbase.com/arjunrc


Thank You
For
Reading
PBase Magazine